

# It Seems That I've Slipped Into a Different World. Also, My Gender Has Changed

## Arc 2 – Autumn of Newcomer

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## Chapter 60: Suddenly, A Freeloading Young Man

“Seiren, Saryuu. I know it’s very sudden, but starting from today, there will be a freeloader staying in our house for a while.”

My father said that during breakfast at the end of September. Speaking of calendar, the week of Autumn Banquet is coming soon in a few days, but well, it might be similar to what we called autumn equinox in the other world, a lively period of time with autumn festivals.

“A freeloader?”

“Yes, actually... Yesterday, my distant relative sent me a letter saying that he’d come to stay for a while.”

“A distant relative?”

I have heard that the Shikino are really our distant relative, but if the one staying is one of the Shikino, then just say so.

Or rather, there doesn’t seem to be anyone from the Shikino to come and freeload here. Taiga-san has been really busy ever since he became the feudal lord and we haven’t met again ever since. We exchanged letters once a week, though. Because I got mad the other day that he used the same day service each time, he restrained himself from using it as expected.

I felt a bit lonely, but... well let’s leave that matter aside. First, let’s focus on the current topic on hand.

My father understood that I didn’t know any other distant relative than the Shikino, so he properly explained about it to me.

“He’s from another house in Shikino. He’s their eldest son, his name is Leo. He is 23 years old, so he’s relatively close in age with Seiren.”

“Leo-san, is it?”

“Well, he is not a bad person, but... he’s a bit pushy and his character is strong. I have more or less told him about Seiren’s circumstances, but then he said that even so, he’d still like to meet you...”

After saying that, Tou-san scratched his silver hair as if he was troubled over

something.

Or rather, I can understand how pushy he is from how he suddenly wants to come here, but about his character...

Since my father was unusually faltering like this, I wonder if he is a quite amazing person.

Perhaps Saryuu was also thinking of the same thing, so he tried to ask Tou-san. I see, so you also have never met him, huh.

“By a strong character, what kind of “strong” is it?”

“...Well, you’ll understand once you meet him. However, please don’t be rude to him.”

“Yes.”

Aah, yup. Well, though we called him a freeloader, he was still one of our people who came from the same feudal lord house like the Shikino, after all. Or more precisely, so you don’t feel like telling us what kind of person Leo-san is until we meet him ourselves, huh, Tou-san? Meanwhile, Kaa-san...

“Seiren and Saryuu will also be surprised once you meet him, for sure. There are various kind of people in this world.”

She also didn’t want to tell us-. What a fun smile she was making over there. Seriously, what kind of person is coming? Really, just spare me.

“...Well, Saryuu...”

“...I’m worried, Neesama.”

It’s natural for us to be looking at each other and heaving a sigh. Really, these parents of mine...

Anyway, the matter will remain unsettled with us just sighing around, so first, let’s try asking the maids. They might know a little bit of that person.

“Leo-sama, is it?”

“Yup. Alica-san, Minoa-san, do you know him?”

“As far as it goes, only the rumors. He seems to be living in the capital, but we have never met him, not even once, though.”

“Master has gone to the capital to do some business several times, so he met him during one of his visits there, right?”

“Hmmm...”

The two of them have never met him directly, too, huh? Since he is the eldest son of a good house, I wonder if he's always been staying around his house only? Ah, Taiga-san seemed to have a hobby of going around his territory, but it might be a bit different.

People of the capital, huh? I have never been to the capital before, but the capital that I know is different after all, so I think. No, well, I mean there's no skyscraper in this world.

Even then, I thought a little bit. How nice it would be if he doesn't make fun of us just because we are country bumpkins.

"From what the Master has told us before, it seems that he is a considerably good person and that it's fun talking with him."

"Is that so? Alica-san knows about that much, only?"

"Yes. What about Minoa?"

"For the time being, I have only heard the talk about how he's going to come here tomorrow, so we were told this morning. But at that time, Yuzuruha-san told me to not throw a basket at him."

"...So he's a kind of person that's quick to retort, huh?"

A good person with a few strange points, huh? Taiga-san was generally like that, though.

...Huh? Did I tell Yuzuruha-san that we almost threw a basket at Taiga-san in summer?

Ah well, it isn't strange if the matter leaked out from somewhere. Yup.

However, I couldn't really dig any information from the maids.

After eating lunch, I tried to attack Kuon-sensei with the same question. When I did so...

"I know him more or less, but I was told by the Madame to let you know about him when you directly meet him later on. Saryuu-sama also asked the same question this morning."

"Gwaah, you're forbidden to speak, huh-?"

How mean. Kaa-san, don't go all out for weird things like this.

Or well, Kuon-sensei, don't show the same smile as Kaa-san, that seemed like you were enjoying the situation. Do you also enjoy watching our reactions? Damn it.

Or perhaps I should say, just what kind of person is he, for them to go this far to not tell us anything? Good grief.

“And obviously, it’s also useless to ask Yuzuruha-san about it, right?”  
“That’s right. Now then, let’s start studying-!”

Kuon-sensei laughed and opened the textbook. Recently, I have become able to read books bit by bit, and that’s rather fun.

The maple leaves could also be seen even here during autumn. The maple leaves’ appearance was honestly something bad for the servants, but that’s because it’s troublesome for them to clean up after the fallen leaves, so it can’t be helped. Incidentally, we can use them to make a bonfire, but there’s no habit to make baked sweet potatoes here. Umu, how disappointing.  
After Kuon-sensei’s lesson was over, I had a bit free time until dinner, so I took a leisure walk around the mansion. Alica-san is coming with me and I have her tell me various things, so it’s fun.

“Even still, their red color is still pretty. Do we also view those leaves?”  
“Yes. It’s called the Autumn Flower Viewing in here.”  
“Oh-, I see.”

I see, so it’s not like they’re seeing the red-or-yellow-colored leaves as flowers, huh. When you put it that way, I think it’s something like autumn-leaf viewing in the other world. Even if they aren’t doing that flower viewing, the autumn festival is coming soon, so it seems that the town will be bustling with people.

Because that incident happened during the Spring Festival, I might not be allowed to go and see the Autumn Festival, right? It’s a bit unfortunate, but it can’t be helped.

A rustling sound could be heard from above. I thought it was relatively far away, but in no time, it quickly approached... It’s a horse-. It’s coming straight to me!

“Waaaaaa?!”  
“Seiren-sama!”

Nearly at the same time as when Alica-san grabbed my arms and pulled me back, the horse managed to stop right in front of us, somehow. Unlike Genjirou,

this horse's all pitch-black that at a glance it seems like a huge crow. The person who rode on its back, control your horse better! Since I was thrown strongly by Alica-san, my waist felt like it'd come out, damn it.

"Please be careful! It's dangerous!"

"Oh my, I'm sorry. Come on, Hanako, don't be so riotous just because it's our first time coming here."

"Ah, ye...s?"

Hearing the response from the man as Alica-san reprimanded him, I tilted my head in my surprise.

Though the tone is a woman's, the voice is unmistakably a man's, despite it being a bit high-pitched.

This is, could he be...?

While I was thinking about it, the person who rode on the horse's back—that seemed to be called Hanako—came down.

"Oh my, maid-san, I'm sorry. This is my Hanako-chan. Please look after her for a moment."

"Eh, ah, yes."

"Hanako, you too, please stay calm. I won't ignore it if you do that again."

Alica-san gulped and held the reins. Hanako also became calm, but what the heck is going on? Did she get scared because of her owner's previous threat? That seemed to be the case.

Or, this person, for him to be able to come inside our premise, did he clear Jigen-san's authentication? While I was wondering about it, that person walked until he was right in front of me.

"Can you stand? Are you all right?"

"Ah, I'm all right... Thank you very much."

He doesn't seem to be a bad person as he asked me if I was all right while holding out his hand to help me. In any case, when I stood up with the help of his hand, the person in front of me is considerably taller than me... he's also taller than Taiga-san.

...He's also wearing a prettier make-up than me. The make-up applied isn't that deep but the eyelashes are long, and his lips look vibrant. Whoa, I'm going to

lose my appeal.

His red hair—I wonder if he dyed it?—had no crease at all and it was slightly shorter than my hair, but it grew long until his shoulders. On top of his unbleached shirt, he was wearing a burgundy long vest, and he was wearing dark blue slacks. Overall, he was quite stylish.

“Really, I’m so sorry. I should have been more careful.”

“Wa, haa... uhm, me too, I’m sorry for not paying more attention to what’s above.”

“No, Ojou-chan, there’s no need for you to apologize... eh, oh my.”

“Nnn?” He said as if he noticed something and he slightly bent his waist so that his face could meet mine at the same height. He took a long hard look at me before finally asking.

“Speaking of which, the maid-san called you earlier, but are you really Seiren-chan?”

“...Who might you be?”

Spare me from that “-chan” behind my name—I held back before I could say that as I needed to stay alert for now. Nah well, I mean, with what happened at summer, and a lot of other reasons. Oh, well.

Perhaps he understood that I was on guard, he lightly shrugged his shoulders. He returned to his straight posture and combed his red hair upwards.

“Oh my, haven’t you heard the story from Uncle Mondo? That a handsome young relative is going to sleep over?”

“I didn’t hear about the handsome young man part, but I have heard the story about a distant relative coming here.”

By a handsome young man, is he referring to himself? I wanted to say, “Don’t call yourself handsome!” but it was a bother to do, so I only told him what I’ve heard today honestly. Then, that person clapped both of his hands and laughed. Ah, he was cute when he laughed, this person.

“Yes, yes, that’s it! I’m Leo, pleased to meet you!”

Then, he winked. Whoa.

I see, so this person is Leo-san, huh? Certainly, his character is strong, Tou-san. I reflexively turned my gaze into a distant look.

Or rather than saying that it's a secret until I meet him directly, isn't it because they don't understand how they should explain about him well?

"Can I call you Seiren-chan?"

"Ah, yes. I'm Seiren, pleased to meet you."

The moment I reconfirmed my identity, I was hugged by Leo-san. No, this situation, how am I supposed to react? No matter what the circumstances may be, there's no way I can beat him, and perhaps my power would just be overmatched.

"Oh dear-, what a cute and polite child you're-! Oni-san wants to look after you!"

"Eh, eh, eh?"

"Wai, L-Leo-sama! Please get away from Seiren-sama!"

"Leo-sama! If you're coming, please give us a notice beforehand!"

Perhaps hearing Alica-san's yell as she was holding on to Hanako, Yuzuruha-san rushed off from the mansion.

Ah, by giving a notice beforehand, perhaps it's like: 'I'm coming soon, so please get ready-, ' or something like that, made by the person coming. The servants have lots of work to do, huh? Ah, I tried to escape from the reality again today.

...Orphanage director. There are also effeminate men in this world, huh? Or rather, a crossdressing man? I don't know well about it, too. Or perhaps I should say, this person is our freeloading guest, huh-?

"Oh dear me, if you're being such a cute Ojou-sama like this, then come and let me put you inside a box. Good grief-."

Being torn away from me, Leo-san puffed out his cheeks. Yuzuruha-san dropped his shoulders, and I could understand his feelings.

Oh well, so I'm going to be under the same roof as this person? Will I be all right?



## Chapter 61: Nice to Meet You, The Freeloading Young Man

“I’m really sorry. I came in a hurry and it resulted in this situation.”

Though it was unusual, but Leo-san was led to Tou-san’s room. Saryuu, Kaa-san, and I also came along and received our tea. The one who delivered the tea was a beautiful maid around 30 years of age, the maid-san who worked under Tou-san. She seemed to be called Yuuki-san. I didn’t meet her that often. Within the business-like room, Leo-san’s figure excessively stood out. Because of that, Tou-san made a slightly troubled face. And suddenly, it became a light preaching session, but it seemed to be ineffective against Leo-san.

“Good grief. I’ll be really troubled if Leo-dono isn’t being careful.”

“Really, I said sorry. Hey, Mondo-ojisama.”

“...There is no next time.”

“Yes, I feel indebted to you. Also, it might be better to strengthen the protection a little bit, you know?”

“I will let Jigen know about it later. But then, perhaps he might have noticed it, too.”

“As expected.”

My father’s scolding felt as if it just passed through this person’s right ear to his left ear. It’s fine for him to be smiling like that, but I’d like him to listen and pay more attention. Hanako must have it hard too, as the rider is this person. For the time being, let’s continue drinking tea together with Kaa-san and Saryuu until everything calms down. Ah, today’s cookies are delicious. After enjoying the tea for a little while, Yuzuruha-san finally came. At a glance, it seemed that there was someone else behind him.

“Excuse me. Leo-sama, your escorts have arrived, so I guided them here.”

“Oh my, thank you. They finally came. Is it fine if they come in as well?”

“Yeah, go on ahead.”

The people who got my father’s permission to get in were men who felt like they were twins at a glance. Their hair wasn’t so long that it reached their

shoulders, but they had beautiful black hair, with one person's bang got divided by his right eye, while the other person's bang was divided by his left eye. Their outward appearance could be distinguished using that alone, as the two of them were wearing the same black outfit. Nah, they were cool, but somehow, they looked like ninjas.

Anyway, the person whose bang was divided by his right eye looked at Leo-san and lifted his eyebrows.

“Leo-sama! Even when I have always told you not to go by yourself!”

“Don't be angry, Ayato, I just got scolded by Mondo-ojisama, after all. I will do a self-introspection.”

“Is that so? Mondo-dono, please apologize us for causing you so much trouble.”

“Nah, don't mention it. It looks difficult on you as usual, huh, Ayato-dono?”

“Yes, that's right.”

At my father's words, the young man called as Ayato heaved a long sigh. Ah-, these two are accompanying Leo-san, huh? Thank you for your hard work. The person whose bang was divided by his left eye didn't react to Ayato-san's complaint or Leo-san's reply, he was only looking without saying anything. Though their appearances looked a lot similar, it seemed that their characters were quite different.

Then, Leo-san noticed how I was comparing the two of them and clapped his hands.

“Ah, I'll introduce them to Seiren-chan and Saryuu-chan. They're my attendants, this one is the noisy Ayato. That one is the silent Maito.”

“What do you mean by noisy? Really. I'm Ayato, pleased to make your acquaintance.”

“...I'm Maito. Pleased to meet you.”

The person with his bang divided by his right eye—Ayato-san complained while furrowing his brows, but he still properly bowed. The person with his bang divided by his left eye who was right at the opposite side of him—Maito-san greeted us in low voice. However just like Ayato-san, he properly bowed to us.

I'd better not say it, but Leo-san's explanation is the easiest way to distinguish the two of them. I wonder if he recognized it because they were always

together? Though I think that Ayato-san was noisy because perhaps he got angry at Leo-san often.

Perhaps feeling relieved because his two attendants finally arrived, Leo-san finally asked Tou-san.

“By the way, I wonder where should I sleep?”

“We have prepared the guest room on the second floor, so you may bring your luggage in there.”

However, that question wasn't answered by Tou-san, but it was Ayato-san who promptly replied. Is it the guest room that's so close by Saryuu's room? I hope nothing goes wrong, though.

Or rather, did they move their luggage before coming here? Perhaps there were a lot of Leo-san's clothes already put inside the drawers. Could it be even gaudier than the content of my drawers?

Yuzuruha-san seemed to have something to ask of Leo-san, so he lightly bent himself forward.

“Leo-sama. What about your two attendants?”

“These two will be staying at the same room as me, so would you please just prepare us meals?”

“Yes, I'll do so. About cleaning the room...”

“We will be doing it. We forced you to welcome us here, so we should at least do that much.”

Oh my?

The two attendants would be staying in Leo-san's room, and not the servants and employees' rooms? ...I wonder if they're his personal attendants, as I was told that he was some family's eldest son and presumably the heir? I think that it's fine even if they leave the cleaning to us, but they might have various reasons.

...For me to say to leave the cleaning to our servants, I think I have really gotten used to this way of living now, huh? I have to pay more attention.

Even so.

To begin with, I also had a question to ask. That's why, let's try asking.

“Uhm.”

“Hm, what is it, Seiren-chan?”

“Leo-san, why did you come to our house?”

“Hmm—, to see Seiren-chan.”

No, no, no, no.

If my mouth was full of tea, I’m sure that I’d spurt it out by this time.

No matter how you put it, there’s no way that it’s his reason to come all the way here.

“You see-. It’s because Mondo-ojisama kept flaunting about how his adorable daughter finally returned home, so that made me want to see her. And she got a fiance in the twinkling of an eye, so I’d better see her quickly.”

...Tou-san, did you really flaunt about it? Nah well, I understand that both you and Kaa-san tend to be doting parents in the first place, though.

Or perhaps I should ask, what’s up with him having to see me quickly? Did he consider me as a panda or koala? Though I don’t know if such rare animals exist here or not.

“Ane-sama is not a show item!”

“Oh dear, I understand that. I also wanted to try and see Saryuu-chan who was thinking of that older sister of his.”

“...”

Ooh, Saryuu’s face turned bright red. Leo-san, you managed to overturn the situation well. However, I agree with Saryuu’s opinion on how I am not a show item.

Leo-san who compared the sulky me and the bright red Saryuu then laughed. It was a little bit feminine and gentle smile, and then he continued his words,

“And then.”

“I also wanted to see the Harvest Festival once. The capital doesn’t hold it often.”

“Is that so?”

“After all, there are many buildings in the capital but there is no farm nor field at all over there. All the food and drinks were all carried from outside, so there’s nothing to harvest.”

Leo-san pouted his cheeks as if saying, “How boring-!” and he looked even more childish than me and Saryuu that way, that I ended up laughing a bit.

I see. Even here, the city is the city, there are mostly no farmers there. That's why, there's also no Harvest Festival there.

I ended up thinking that it's surely boring that way. Nah, there is also a festival held in order to express our gratitude to the God of Sun, but it felt somehow different from the Harvest Festival.

"Hey, hey. Isn't it also Seiren-chan's first time with the Autumn's Harvest Festival? Won't you go out together with me to visit it?"

"What?"

I stiffened in an instant at Leo-san's abrupt proposal as he bent himself forward.

My first time, huh.

Aah, more or less, the setting of [me being the daughter that finally came home after recuperating from her weak constitution] worked wonder here. Nah, that seems to be the case. Taiga-san have been told of the truth, but as expected, Leo-san didn't know of it.

That's why, it's my first time celebrating the Autumn Harvest Festival. Yup, it isn't wrong, but well.

"No, well, I..."

"I?"

Whoa, that's dangerous, I almost said it. It's fine if he's Taiga-san, but in front of Leo-san, I have to properly display myself as a woman.

...Sorry for always comparing you with Taiga-san.

"...That's not it. I got lost and separated from the people who accompanied me during the Spring Festival, that's why..."

"Ah. Some naughty children teased you, right?"

"That can't do," so Leo-san said and he poked his fingertip at my forehead. What's with this kind of treatment, is he treating me like a little sister? Anyway, what Leo-san said wasn't wrong in a sense, so I gave an evasive answer, "Well, it's something like that." Or rather, I wonder if it was an expression of his concern to me?

"Nn, it's fine. I'll be with you, Ayato and Maito are also coming along. If there are three handsome men accompanying you, the delinquents are not a big

deal.”

“Why is it settled already?”

“Because there’s no way I’m going when you guys aren’t coming along, right? Hey, Maito.”

“...If it’s your order.”

Really, Ayato-san, Maito-san, thank you for your hard work. Or well, no matter what they say, they’re still his servants, so they’d feel like they have to follow Leo-san’s orders.

“Hey, is it fine, Maya-obasama?”

Ah, he changed his target to my mother because my reaction was slow. But well, my mother being the way she is, she’s putting a nonchalant air. Then, she said without hesitation.

“I think it’s fine as long as you also bring Seiren’s maids along.”

“Oh my, am I unreliable?”

“At the very least, I’m worried about my daughter who will be surrounded by only men.”

“That is right. Since it’s your adorable daughter, of course you’d be worried.”

In a sense, this seemed like a fellow women’s conversation, and though they were laughing outwardly, for some reason there was something that made it feel scary from their gazes.

Or perhaps I should say, Leo-san, I have a fiance, you know? I’m going to go to Taiga-san’s place next year, okay? Ah-, why is Taiga-san so busy? Nah, it’s because he’s a new feudal lord, though.

Anyway, there seems to be another person who’s thinking of the same thing as me. Naturally, it’s Taiga-san’s biological younger brother, Saryuu. Bang! He knocked the table and interrupted the conversation. Though his ears were still red.

“Wait! I-I’m coming along as well!”

“Oh my. Saryuu-chan is coming along? Well, it’s fine because you’re adorable, though.”

“That’s not fine! No, I mean, I’ve decided to protect Ane-sama until her wedding day!”

“Oh dear, how nice of you to think of your big sister. You’re getting more and more adorable, this Oni-san will be cheering for you!”

“P-please let me go.”

Does this person have a habit of hugging someone he likes? I mean, he couldn’t be drunk in this broad daylight. Or perhaps I should say, Saryuu is so troubled over having his face being rubbed on. Let’s help him to get away with it.

“Leo-san, Saryuu is troubled, so can you please let him go?”

“Eh? Oh my, I’m sorry, it seems that I put a little bit too much force.”

“I-it’s not a bit... *Cough, cough, cough!*”

Whoa, are you all right, Saryuu? Well, that seems to be the case. His style and his choice of wording seems to be like this, but Leo-san is a good man. In addition, he’s got power, too.

“Saryuu, don’t lose to Leo-dono and protect Seiren properly, okay?”

“Whoa, please stop. I’ll surely do my best, so...”

“Well, I’ll be looking forward to your growth, Saryuu. Leo-sama, why don’t you train him, too, at any rate?”

“I’ll also look forward to it. But well, maybe I should do that a little bit?”

Also, Tou-san, Kaa-san. Perhaps that’s not where you should pay more attention to, I think. In the first place, Saryuu’s still growing from now on, so I think it’s not a problem even if he lost here. Nah, I cried when I couldn’t win from brawling with the older boys at the institution or the orphanage director when I was about Saryuu’s age, so I could understand Saryuu’s feelings.

...Speaking of which.

It’s natural to for the servants to speak politely to him, but I wonder why Tou-san and Kaa-san also spoke politely to him?

## Chapter 62: The Awkward Conversation After A Meal

“Thanks for the hard work, Seiren-sama.”

When dinner was over, I returned to my room. Alica-san made a cup of tea for me who was completely exhausted.

Nah, the situation was also like that during dinner, with Leo-san being there. I’m really tired, so I want him to just spare me.

It’s quite difficult trying to wear a mask over your true self. I’m quite used to using “Watashi” to address myself, but I still use “Ore” when I’m at home. Yup.

“Ah no-, even if I explain about that to him beforehand, there’s no way he’d believe me, right...”

“That’s right. Would you like to take a rest early today?”

“Ah-no, I’d like to write a letter to Taiga-san. I want to deliver it tomorrow morning.”

“Understood. Please don’t overdo yourself, okay?”

Ah-well, since it’s come to this, then I want to share this hardship a little bit with Taiga-san. Since he’s busy with his work, he can’t really come here to visit, and I might not get a permission to go that far from home.

“Sorry, Taiga-san. However, I want you to hear me out a bit.”

I dyed the pen nib with ink and wrote to Taiga-san, “Are you doing fine?” and right at that moment, a knock to my room’s door could be heard. Minoa-san hurriedly went to see who it might be... and then she turned at me with a troubled face. Oof, I got a bad hunch.

“Seiren-sama, it’s the guest.”

“Se-iren-chaan! Let’s pla-y!”

The one who suddenly peeked from behind Minoa-san was, well, as expected, it was none other than Leo-san. He seems to still have some makeups on, although it’s thinner than when we were having dinner. Don’t tell me that it’s his face with no make-up?

But still, he is still pretty much a man. As expected, I have a problem with how he peered into my room without getting a permission beforehand. Which is



why, let's try scolding him a bit.

"Minoa-san, you can hit the person over there."

"Yes, then here I go."

"Kya-, stop, stop it, it's my bad!!"

"Excuse me for being rude, but it's truly Leo-sama's fault for doing so. If you do it again, then I won't mind hitting you for real."

It seemed that Minoa-san also understood that I intended to only threaten him, so she stopped at lifting an object that was supposed to strike him. Leo-san exaggeratedly tried to protect his head, and the one who followed him behind as expected was Ayato-san. Ah, Maito-san was stretching his hand as if he was trying to protect Leo-san, more or less. As expected, they also worked as his guard concurrently.

Incidentally, the thing that Minoa-san was about to strike to him was the nearby chair. As expected of her, she lifted the chair lightly. Eh, but it's quite heavy because it is a well-made chair.

"Anyway, what is it? I'm preoccupied right now."

"Oh my-, though you're about to sleep?"

"I was about to write a letter. Since I memorized the alphabets quite late because of various circumstances, it would take time to write no matter what."

He didn't enter the room any further than the door indeed, so he inquired me about what I was up to from his location. Uhm well, since he's together with Ayato-san and Maito-san, I believe that he really came here in order to play. In addition, it's real that it takes quite a bit of time for me to write the alphabets. I mean, since I'm writing it for Taiga-san, I want my writing to be properly readable. Right?

"My, my. Still, isn't it fine for girls to not memorize the alphabets?"

"That can't do. I had some troubles for not being able to read the menu during the Spring Festival."

"Well, that's important, indeed. I'm sorry, it's also important to be able to read and write alphabets in order to exchange love letters, right?"

Leo-san meekly apologized, perhaps he came to realize the importance of having the skill to read and write alphabets.

Nah, really, it's important for you to be able to read menu. Though I was saved by the illustration in the menu during the last festival.

I'm not sure about the culture of memorizing the alphabets here, but there seems to be many people that are able to read and write the alphabets even among the servants and employees in other places. It's obvious that I can read and write the alphabets used in the world where I was raised in, but that is another thing.

Now then, no matter how I think about it... Leo-san, he seems like he'd stay there until morning if I were to ignore him like this.

“Oh well, it's fine, so please come on in. Didn't you come to play? Alica-san, give him a cup of tea.”

“Understood. Please wait for a while.”

“Uwaa, thanks-! Sorry for intruding.”

“Excuse us for bothering you this late.”

“...Good evening. Please excuse me.”

Following Leo-san who leaped into the room, Ayato-san and Maito-san also went inside.

The two of them seemed to be wearing the same outfit as Leo-san when I first saw them, but Leo-san was wearing an outfit that seemed like a yukata, but at the same time it also looked like a bathrobe. The cloth was smooth with a vivid flower pattern. Whoa, he was extremely gaudy. In a sense, it suits him so well. So, I offered them to sit on the sofa, and as if it was natural, only Leo-san sat down while the other two were right behind him. Nah, well, it's a really natural thing to do here, though.

Anyway, as soon as Leo-san sat down, he peered into the writing paper that was at my hand as if he was having fun. Stop it, hey there!

“Anyway, what is it? A love letter to your fiance-?”

“You're correct, but please don't look at it. Would it be fine if I throw my pen to your face?”

“Feel free to do so. I can help you fix the pen later on.”

For the time being, let's cover it with my hand. I didn't have the time to hide it, but don't go peeking at other's letter! Also, I didn't even deny it being a love letter.

When I unintentionally replied to him with my disappearing expression, Ayato-san furrowed his brows and nodded at me. Meanwhile, Maito-san silently grabbed Leo-san's cheeks from behind Leo-san. In this case, it seems like I'd be able to hit him really well—no, wrong, it's not that.

"I haven't seen it and I haven't read it, too! Ayato, don't you go cooperating with her!"

"I haven't said it to Leo-sama, but it seems like you won't understand unless you experience the pain repeatedly on your own. Maito, let him go."

At Ayato-san's words, Maito-san let go of his hands in silence again. Oh my, the part that he held down became slightly red.

He seemed to be so slender, but he was quite powerful, huh? Well, if he wasn't powerful enough, he wouldn't be able to become his attendant in the first place, eh... wait, that is only if Leo-san's attendants also acted as his guards at the same time. But since they were staying at the same room, I doubt that I'm mistaken with my conjecture.

"...Ayato-san and Maito-san seem to have it hard..."

"This is our duty, after all."

"We've gotten used to it."

I tried to show my appreciation while closing the letter in a hurry. I wanted to cry a little due to Maito-san's words that he said in a murmur. I see, so they got used to it, huh. Just how long did it take for them to get used to this kind of thing?

We had a conversation as we drunk the tea that Alica-san brought together. Because of his wording, rather than a conversation with a man, it felt more like a conversation between two female friends, well that can't be helped. Nah, I don't have any other female friends than the maids, though. In this case, I'm not sure if I can include Kuon-sensei in my list of female friends.

But well, speaking of a conversation between women, it has become such a conversation. Nah, the other party's an effeminate man, though. I'm still roughly a man on the inside, though.

"Hey, hey, Seiren-chan, what kind of person is your fiance?"

"Eh, Taiga-san?"

“That’s right. I heard that he’s the new head of the Shikino family?”

“Yes.”

The news about how there was a change of the Shikino family’s head travelled... and has made it all the way to the capital, huh? Well, it might be because it was necessary for them to go through the formalities and report it. Anyway, I wonder what he would like to hear about Taiga-san in this situation? Well, at least I understand that it’s not about how he is as the head of the Shikino family, though.

Which means, he’s asking about my personal opinion, huh?

“Uhm, he’s quite brave, gentle, and attractive. But even so, if he’s aiming for something, he’s not going to sit still and will actively pursue it.”

“Oh-, is that so?”

And so, when I voiced my honest thoughts, Leo-san stared in wonder as if he was a bit surprised.

No, I mean look, he turned up in front of my window on Genjirou, he was cautious enough that he used the same day delivery service, look at those facts and think about it.

I really want to think that I’m seeing things with clear head right now. I wonder what will he do if the work of a feudal lord is too busy that he can’t manage it all? I spontaneously looked into the distance.

“So, in what way is he gentle and attractive, but also brave at the same time?”

“Nah, I mean, maybe it’s only in my opinion, and others might find him unattractive, right? I’m not really skilled in giving an objective opinion.”

“Eh-, didn’t you get yourself a good man? If that’s the case, I think it’s okay if you boast a bit more.”

Ah-yes, well, certainly I admit that he’s a good man. The orphanage director also acknowledged him.

I mean, I don’t know if I have the ability to judge others’ characters. ...I wonder if I can really trust my own eyes?

“So, that head of the Shikino family, which number is he for you?”

“What?”

I thought of his question for a little bit, as I could’t understand what it meant

for a moment. Or rather, what did he mean by which number?

“I am ask-ing yo-u. In which number is he standing at your crush history?”  
“Crush... is it?”

Aah, so it's such a thing. The number of crush, huh?  
Hmm well, how do I say it, I can't think of a thing, so let's try thinking about it.  
Wait, it's unnecessary, the answer's clear.  
Though I was a man before I came here, to be frank, I've never fallen in love with a girl before, or should I say that I wasn't that interested in such a thing, or was it because the girls at the institution were so dominating that they felt more like my elder sisters that the thought of dating them was out of question? I'm also aware that the person I was the most emotionally attached to was the orphanage director.  
Then, I came here and returned to being a woman, and then for the first time...  
Uhm, that, the person I came to like was Taiga-san.  
In other words.

“...Perhaps, my first... crush.”  
“Eh-? No way, though Seiren-chan seems to be quite popular-!”  
“That's the truth. In the first place, it wasn't that kind of environment.”  
“Eh, is that so? You were recuperating in the countryside, right...? How does the countryside look like in comparison to this place? Don't tell me that there were only horses or cows?”

I can't really tell him that I was in a completely different world, right? Oh well, I think that the area of our villa can be categorized as a countryside area. Could it be that Leo-san hasn't had any chance to go that far from the capital? It seems that there exists the so-called city kid even in this world.

“But hmm, I see... Seiren-chan, you only have a little experience in that area (romance), right?”  
“It's either too shallow... or almost nonexistent.”

Uhm, now that you mention it.  
Taiga-san was pretty assertive, and I felt like I was always being protected by him.  
But, even so.

“Yosh. Seiren-chan, why don’t you try it out with me?”

“What?”

I don’t think that infidelity is recommended, Leo-san.

After all, I was brought up in a place that has a moral value that such a thing is bad. At any rate, my foster parent remained unmarried for 30 years because he was charmed with a woman. ...I can’t tell you about it, though.

## Chapter 63 : A Commotion, The Meal Next Morning

“...Can you stop joking?”

As expected, since I detested the idea of having an affair whether it's for real or just a joke, I stopped hiding my anger. I tried to glare at him, but perhaps, I don't think that the female me possessed any intensity in doing so. As a proof, Leo-san only looked at me while smiling. He didn't seem to be surprised, nor did he seem to be afraid of me.

Also, his eyes quickly narrowed. Whoa, my opponent has even more intensity than me when he does that.

“Oh my, I'm quite serious, though? Seiren-chan, you might get cheated by some man in the future. So, you gotta practice, practice.”

Nn. There is no change in his tone, but his voice sounds somewhat serious. Which means, was he really serious about the affair thing he was talking about? He said something about practicing, but seriously, give me a break.

“I don't want to practice doing that.”

“Hmm, well, you're such a serious person, after all.”

When I tried to make it apparent by declaring my resolute rejection, as expected, Leo-san understood that I was being serious and posed himself by throwing up his hands. Nah, seriously, spare me already. Even if I were that shrewd, I'm not such a fickle person.

“Leo-sama.”

Look, even Ayato-san sounded like he was angry. Leo-san who got surprised for a moment then turned around to look at him and the sullen Maito-san while laughing, “Ahaha.” Could it be that he was having a cold sweat?

“I understand. I won't insist on it.”

“You were already insistent at the time when you intruded here.”

“An obstinate man is detestable.”

“Oof-, even Maito said so?”

Even I was also surprised. It hasn't even been one day since I first met them,

but strange enough, I could understand what Maito-san spoke of so bluntly. However, as expected that Leo-san would break down if even Maito-san spoke like that. Leo-san meekly bowed his head down.

“I’m sorry. I was careless.”

“There is no next time, okay?”

“Yee-s!”

When I pouted a bit, Leo-san shrugged his shoulders while shaking his head. As one would expect, I’m relieved that he isn’t the kind of person to keep insisting even at this point. No, in that case, this whole residence would get involved, though.

“Nn, but be careful. Seiren-chan is way too adorable, so there will surely be a lot of insects approaching you.”

I unconsciously trembled in surprise when he mentioned the word “insect”. I guess Leo-san said that in order to praise me, but still. I was turned into a man just so there won’t be any insects approaching me. Perhaps, there is still some disgust left inside my head at those words inside my head even until now, I think. To be honest, I feel disgusted from hearing those words just now.

“Minoa-san, chair.”

“Yes.”

Even with those few words alone, Minoa-san managed to catch what I meant. She grasped the chair that she lifted earlier and changed her position to be ready to hit.

No, I’m not telling you to really hit him, alright? Minoa-san seemed to understand that too, and since there were Ayato-san and Maito-san over there, it was most likely impossible to hit him, so she stopped. However, it was still a sensitive topic to me, so...

“Kyaa! Good nightt!”

“Good night, Leo-sama.”

“Good night. Please take care.”

Leo-san jumped up from the sofa in a fluster and went out of the door. Minoa-san and Alica-san sent him out, even when Minoa-san was still holding



the chair and Alica-san tidying up the tea. Ayato-san and Maito-san pursued Leo-san in a hurry, but they stopped right in front of the door and turned around at us. The two of them straightened their postures and bowed.

“Good night, Seiren-sama. We really apologize for Leo-sama’s behavior. Please accept our apology.”

“...We’re sorry.”

“Aah, yeah, Ayato-san and Maito-san didn’t do anything wrong. Thanks for your hard work.”

“We’re greatly obliged to your words. Well then.”

The two of them took out their breath in relief at my answer and went out of the room. *Thud*—As the sound of the closing door could be heard, Minoa-san returned the chair back to its original position. Alica-san examined my expression thoroughly.

“Are you all right, Seiren-sama? Your complexion seems to be slightly bad.”

“Ah... Yes, I’m fine.”

Whoa, did it affect my complexion? This is bad, this is bad, I have to be more careful.

Nah, I realized that he was quite peculiar just like Touka-san. But well... Ah yeah, I certainly can’t be accustomed to such people. Since there was that incident during the spring festival, I haven’t gone out of the mansion that often. However, it’s clear to me now that dealing with a female and a male is really different in various aspects. Yup.

“...Before going to bed, I’ll write a letter to Taiga-san. I still want to send it out first thing in the morning tomorrow.”

“Understood.”

Not good, not good, no matter how much I put my thoughts into it alone, the answer won’t come out. If that’s the case, let’s ask someone else’s opinion. That way is absolutely better than pondering alone. Taiga-san, sorry for giving you more troubles.

For the time being, let’s write about how Leo-san, the freeloader, came. His personality, and about how he said that I needed to be more careful since there would be insects approaching me. I also wrote about how the word “insects”

that he said caused me to feel disgusted. And as for his statement that suggested an affair... Ah, let's just write them down just in case. I added that I had properly rejected his idea.

I wonder if he would get angry... but I thought that it'd be good if he expressed his concern. Really, I'm such a selfish and an uncool person, huh.

The next morning, I woke up at the sound of the door opening. I must be very tired, since I didn't have any dream last night.

"Good morning, Seiren-sama-."

"Morning, Oriza-san."

That's right, it's the day Oriza-san comes. In comparison to Minoa-san and Alica-san, she's easier to talk to, and I feel saved because of it. And, speaking of which, the one who's taking a day off today is Minoa-san, so I can't ask her to throw the chair. Nah. I won't do so, though.

"Good morning, Seiren-sama. You had a nice rest last night, right?"

"Morning, Alica-san. Yeah, I think I was very tired last night."

"I understand your feelings. Here you go."

Alica-san brought me a bucket of water and a towel, so I washed my face and felt refreshed. Phew-, yosh, I'm fully awake now.

"As instructed, I have sent out the letter first thing in the morning."

"Ah, yes, thanks."

Ah-, I'm glad. I had properly written the letter and stamped the wax seal on it. I wonder if it would arrive at Taiga-san's place by tomorrow?

When I was thinking about it, Oriza-san beckoned me with a mischievous expression. Since she was next to the window, I wonder if there is something happening outside?

"Seiren-sama, there's another good scene today, too."

"What is it?"

"Uhm, it's something quite interesting."

"Interesting?"

Oriza-san pointed out below the window, so I thought that it had something to do with Saryuu's morning training, but I wonder what is it? Come to think of

it, I heard the sound of swords clashing, so I wonder if he was in the middle of sparring with someone?

In any case, I got down from the bed and came near the window to peek below it.

“Whoaa...”

Saryuu was holding his wooden sword and was facing Leo-san who was also holding a similar sword. I had seen Saryuu sparring with Taiga-san the other day, but this morning's opponent was Leo-san.

Taiga-san managed to dodge Saryuu's attacks quite well, but Leo-san also managed to dodge his attacks completely, huh? If Taiga-san's movements seemed like an actual fighting, then Leo-san's movements looked as if he was dancing instead.

He managed to stop the blow of Saryuu's attacks while turning round and round.

Really, who the heck is that person?

“Hey, isn't it interesting?”

“...Ah-, yes. It's amazing.”

While I was looking at them absent-mindedly, Leo-san noticed me before long. He paid no attention to Saryuu and waved his hand at me. Oi oi, you're creating your own weak spot.

“Oh my? Seiren-chaaan, morniiing!”

“An opening!”

“Too naïve-!”

*clash*, a loud voice could be heard.

Leo-san managed to send Saryuu's wooden sword flying with the wooden sword that he was holding even while he was looking at me. No way-, was he able to grasp Saryuu's hit just from his presence and the sound of his fast movements? That's really amazing.

“...Good morning. So you had Leo-san as your opponent today, Saryuu?”

“G-good morning, Ane-sama. Although this person is like this, but he's strong!”

“That's natural. It's quite risky if you don't master one or two martial arts, right?”

Leo-san turned the wooden sword with just one hand around and put it back on his waist. He was laughing happily, “Fufun!”, so I wonder if it was fun to have a match with Saryuu.

“Also, it’s quite rude to say, ‘although this person is like this,’ you know? Well, I’m conscious of it, though.”

“Ah, I’m sorry for that.”

Well, I understand Saryuu’s words very well. Furthermore, Leo-san’s clothes seemed like a red one-piece whose color resembled maple leaves. A black sash belt was tightened at his waist, and under that knee-length clothes, he was wearing a black and slender slacks, or so it seemed.

He was so gaudy even this early in the morning. If I looked at him thoughtlessly, it seemed like my eyes would hurt.

Anyway, well, that was what caused me to be even more awake. Saryuu also has his morning preparations, so he must return to his own room, too.

“Good grief. Anyway, it’s about time-.”

“Yes, I understand. Well then, Ane-sama, excuse me!”

“By time, do you mean breakfast? Oh my, then I shall excuse myself as well. See you later, Seiren-chan.”

“Yes, until later.”

Leo-san also nodded as if he understood, perhaps he managed to quickly guess my conversation with Saryuu. In response to Leo-san who waved his hand as he left, I also waved my hand as I sent him off.

Ah, as expected, Ayato-san and Maito-san also came and stayed behind Leo-san. It seemed quite hard for them from so early in the morning.

Anyway, after everyone disappeared from the sight, Oriza-san—who was clueless on what was happening last night—took a long hard look at my face.

“...Seiren-sama. He called you with ‘-chan’, huh-?”

“He also attached ‘-chan’ to Saryuu. My situation might be better than him.”

“...I can’t find any words to say...”

Oriza-san shrugged her shoulders. Well, she already knows that I was a man, after all. Leo-san shouldn’t know about it, so it’s not weird for him to address me with a “-chan”. As for Saryuu, it might be because he was quite younger

than Leo-san.

## Chapter 64: What Kind of Person is the Freeloading Young Man?

The breakfast on that particular day ended surprisingly ordinary. Leo-san was also quiet, or rather, he was like this last night, too. However, his table manners were perfect.

“Ah, Mondo-ojisama. There’s something I’d like to talk with you, so is it fine for me to go to your room?”

“Fumu. I don’t mind, I’ll be waiting for you.”

I was curious about what Leo-san and Tou-san might be talking about. However, since I understand that it isn’t something that can be talked in front of us, I kept my mouth tight. I don’t understand what Kaa-san might be feeling inside, but at least she was putting a calm expression.

When I was about to return, Ayato-san apologetically lowered his head to me, perhaps the thing from last night was still lingering in his mind. Thinking that I might have acted quite immature as well, I also bowed my head.

Since I decided to read books throughout this morning, I went back to my room to take out a particular book. It was a storybook written for children, but Kuon-sensei recommended this book so that I could memorize the alphabets even more after reading this. The book was certainly written in a composition that was easy to understand, and the illustration was pretty as well, so in the end, it was fun to read.

It was the so-called adventure, but the protagonist didn’t use magic. They used various tools, and although the names were different, they were similar to, for example, a personal computer or gun. Since this is a world where magic exists, perhaps this kind of a story is categorized as a fantasy or a dream-like story instead. I was impressed in some way by this.

“Hee—. So the world where Seiren-sama lived before was like that?”

“Yup. I wonder if the orphanage director is working hard even at this moment?”

“It’d be good if we could meet Touya-sama again, right?”

Since Oriza-san and Alica-san knew the content of the book, I tried to talk a

little bit about the world where I grew up to them. Oriza-san's round eyes turned even rounder after knowing that it was a place that really resembled the world that was portrayed inside the book. The way she perceived it was different from me, so that was quite interesting.

Alica-san put her hand on her cheek as if she was thinking of something. Right after that, she immediately voiced out the question that she had thought inside her mind.

"I can't really imagine a world without magic, so, for example, what do you usually do about the lights during the night?"

"A long time ago, people used candles or oil to light a fire, so it seemed. For now, we're using the electricity... uhm well, there is this energy that is similar to thunder, and that energy covers most of everything."

"I see, I see. Since the worlds are different, there are lots of different things as well, huh."

"Yes, that's right-. However, there are things that don't differ a lot, like table manners. Thanks to that, I was saved."

Nah, really, I was mostly saved by that when I first came here. In addition, the way to use the toilet is more or less the same, too. There are lots of common features in some trivial gestures, so when I only looked at such things, I ended up wondering if it was really a different world or not.

The easiest way to perceive that it was really the other world was the level of science development without any magic around, and perhaps the weapons there.

"Do you not use swords often in the other world?"

"I didn't hear much about them being used. They are mostly used in competitions or matches, though."

When it comes to wars or any kind of fighting, the people there generally use guns or the likes of them. I heard about it only from the stories in the television, so I don't really understand about it well.

"Huh-... But in exchange of it, you're using attacks that are similar to great magic, right?"

"Yeah, yeah. That's why, to be honest, the world over there prioritized maintaining peace, I think. Since otherwise, the countries that possessed such

great weapons might confront one another.”

“It’s quite dangerous, huh...”

Really, I have no words to reply Oriza-san’s speech that was mixed with sigh. Since it’s quite dangerous, after all.

Well, I think that the dangers were quite similar over here. Whether it’s a large-scale danger or a small-scale danger. For you see, there is magic here, and there are also a lot of people who can use swords... And then, since it came to this, I recalled Leo-san from this morning.

“Speaking of swords. Leo-san was amazing, huh?”

“Yes-. His ability showed that he genuinely mastered it with all of his might.”

“Oriza-san also thinks so?”

“Of course-. It seems like he has been trained ever since he was small. Even if he were to face several opponents at the same time, he might be able to defeat them alone, maybe-?”

Whoa, is that so? Well, certainly he managed to repel Saryuu’s attack even without glancing at him. I thought that such a thing was only something from anime or from a historical play, though.

Alica-san who had been silently making some tea up until that point suddenly cut into our conversation.

“I have also seen Ayato-san and Maito-san’s skills, they’re just as good as Leo-sama.”

“Aah, no wonder. Those two are Leo-san’s escorts who directly guard and escort him, right?”

“That’s right. They seemed to have received such training ever since they were small, as well. Seiren-sama might haven’t noticed it, but those two almost didn’t make any noises upon walking.”

Eh, seriously? Since there are carpets laid out in our residence, people don’t really make that much of a noise upon walking on it, but come to think of it, I felt like I didn’t hear their footsteps when they walked below the window this morning. Saryuu stomped his feet over there, so the soil of the ground should have come out, right? And in such a place, they were supposed to make some kind of noises due to that soil, right?

Or perhaps I could say that Ayato-san and Maito-san who didn’t make any kind



of footsteps were really ninjas. I think that kind of occupation should exist here.

...And the person who holds a direct control over those presumably ninjas, the person towards whom my father and my mother used polite language—Leo-san, just what kind of a person is he?

“Alica-san, Oriza-san.”

“Yes?”

Ye-s, what is it?”

When I tried calling their names so abruptly, the two of them looked at me in a wonder. That’s why, I tried asking them while smiling.

“The two of you unexpectedly know of Leo-san’s identity, right?”

“Wha, eh?!”

Ou, Oriza-san, your reaction was really something. Still, he is unmistakably someone who comes from a considerably good house. His outfits are also good, he masters swordsmanship perfectly, and he’s being accompanied by two attendants that also act as guards.

Meanwhile, Alica-san remained calm. Aah yup, her reaction might be the correct manner that a maid should have, I think. Or should I say, as expected of her?

“Even if we know about it, it’s a servant’s duty to not tell you until we’ve got the permission to do so.”

“Which means, Tou-san or Kaa-san forbade you from speaking about it, huh?”

“I will leave it up to your imagination. I’m sorry, Seiren-sama.”

Oriza-san answered while showing an embarrassed grin, “Tehehe.” Well, that seems just about right. Something that they can’t tell me even when I ask, obviously it’s the higher-up’s... in other words, it’s an order from Tou-san or Kaa-san.

In addition.

“Nah, it’s fine. It’s probably because they don’t want me to be conscious of Leo-san or such kind of reason.”

It was a pattern that I saw in dramas especially in historical dramas, like how some feudal lords would hide their own status while walking around the city. I

think that they did so in order not to let their status be known for it might cause the others' reactions to become stiff, and they wouldn't be able to see the people's ordinary figures, or that they also wanted to be released of their stiff positions. Nah, it's in dramas, though.

At any rate, the world where I'm in right now feels like a world inside the anime or dramas or novels that I saw in the world where I was raised in. I can only think of it like that. For example, about how I'm a feudal lord's daughter and how my fiancé is also a young feudal lord.

I understand that this is really such a world, so I think that it's fine whatever kind of a person Leo-san really is. Though I still think that his statement that suggested an affair can't be tolerated, yup.

"Perhaps Leo-san picked a quarrel with me because he thought it was fun that I don't know anything about him. If that's the case, then I'll accompany him just a little bit more."

"...That's good. I also want to think that Leo-sama didn't make such a remark seriously."

Alica-san, for some reason, your statement was quite intense. You're making an expression that seemed to say that you'd totally beat him down if he really said that kind of thing seriously.

Then, that expression changed to a wondering expression. She then asked a question while slightly tilting her head.

"Even so, Seiren-sama... You managed to notice those things quite well, huh?"

"Eh, after all, I don't even know Leo-san's surname. Wouldn't you usually tell your family name during an introduction? Isn't that just weird?"

"...Ah-."

Alica-san and Oriza-san showed a satisfied expression when I pointed that out. This is a custom in this place, after all.

Family names. Just like how Shiiya's mine and Shikino's Taiga-san, well, it's a surname. In this world, people who are at the level of feudal lords and the social positions above them have surnames, while ordinary town people don't possess surnames. It feels like the Edo period, I think. Anyway, people who have family names would properly say their surnames during their introductions. That might be out of pride, or a method of identification in some way, I think.

However, as for Leo-san who came to our house... Though I heard from Tou-san that he was the heir or an eldest son of a house, I don't even know which house he is from. On top of not knowing from which house he is, nobody tells me about it, too.

With this, there's no way that there's nothing going around. Good grief. I was overwhelmed by his character's intensity, but when I tried to think of it through, this is what I found.

"Also, I haven't even heard of what kind of a house he came from, right?"  
"That's right... Haha, well, just let it go, let it go."

Oriza-san who scratched her cheeks felt like she was honestly troubled. Could it be a problem that was way beyond her control?

"Well, that's fine. Since Tou-san allowed him to live in this mansion, that means that he is a good person, right?"

"Yes, of course."

Alica-san nodded in no time at my question. Well, then that's fine. Even I understood that he was a greatly qualified person.

Even so. For him to be the heir of a feudal lord or such kind of family, I wonder if they hadn't said anything about Leo-san having that sort of a personality?

## Chapter 65: So Happy, Gold and Silver Gift

I received Taiga-san's reply two days after I mailed my letter. At that time, lunch was over and I just went out to the entrance hall from the dining room when the postman arrived. I saw Alica-san and Ayato-san received the delivery items, so I stopped. Ah, there was Minoa-san behind me so I was relieved.

"Seiren-sama. It's a delivery item from Taiga-sama."

"T-thanks. How unusual."

"It seems to be a present."

The thing that Alica-san brought to me was a box that could be carried with the palms of my hands. Minoa-san was also interested in the content of the box—the box itself was decorated with a golden ribbon, and certainly this felt like a present. It came along with a familiar wax-sealed letter.

However... Though I was curious about the box, I was even more curious about Ayato-san. I mean, no matter how you look at it, he received more than 10 letters. What's up with that?

"...He's got a lot, huh?"

"That's right. Everything seems to be delivered to Leo-sama."

"Everything... is Leo-san a correspondence demon?"

"Who knows..."

"With all those letters, just how long will it take for him to write the replies?"

Nah well, my bad. There's no way Alica-san and Minoa-san would know about the letters even if I asked them. Still, if I were to ask Ayato-san, perhaps he'd try to just brush it off and escape. Well then, let's stop being curious about it.

Anyway, after I rushed back to my room, Kuon-sensei turned up. Since there's a lesson scheduled with her right after lunch. But, Taiga-san's letter takes priority now. Sorry, Sensei.

"Good afternoon-. Oh my, is it a letter from Taiga-sama?"

"Ah, welcome, Kuon-sensei. Today, there's something else."

"Is it a gift? My, what a passionate one."

Kuon-sensei put her hand on her cheek while smiling as if she was having fun.

It seems to be a clear explanation that she herself has no relation to this kind of topic. That's why, she's having fun when she hears and sees someone's else's story.

In regards to this matter, I can somehow understand the first part, but I can't comprehend the latter part. Nah, when I was a man, I really had no relation whatsoever to this kind of topic, as well. However, I didn't think that it was fun listening to the others' stories.

Minoa-san who had been staring unblinkingly at the box casually asked me.

"Speaking of which, isn't it the first time Taiga-sama sent a present like this?"  
"Yes, it's the first time-. Hehe."

Whoa, my face naturally relaxed. Nah, others would see me grinning foolishly.

"...Kuon-sensei, I will be making a cup of tea right now. I think that Seiren-sama won't be able to concentrate on studying for a while."

"Please do, Alica-san. It's so nice being young, eh?"

"Seiren-sama's smile when we talk about Taiga-sama is so cute."

Hey, the three of you, is it wrong to get cheerful? Don't look at me while grinning like that, it feels slightly embarrassing, you know? Also, Minoa-san, I think that you're the one who looks cute whenever there are sweets in front of your eyes.

Well, for now, the priority is Taiga-san's letter. I used a paper knife to open the seal.

The writing paper that I spread around had the usual tidy writing, saying that he might be able to pause his job some time around the Autumn Banquet's week, so we might be able to meet. Then, about how he was worried about Leo-san who came over here and that he wanted me to be very careful around him, and that he wanted me to properly tell him if my feelings were to sway.

On top of that, he also wrote that his own feelings haven't changed at all.

"...Hehe."

"Oh my. Seiren-sama's beaming with smile."

"Eh, r-really?"

"Yeah. You're pretty feminine this way."

When Kuon-sensei told me about it, I finally returned to reality.

Crap, there were three spectators here. Everyone was concentrating their gazes at me, it was really embarrassing. No, if I think about it, the problem lies in me who's absorbed in reading a love letter so brazenly in public, doesn't it?

"No wonder Taiga-sama is getting worried. There's a freeloading young man who has come here, at the house where his adorable fiancée lives in."

"...Ah-. With the exception of the "adorable" part, now that you mention it..."

Sensei's words continued to ring. My head slightly grew cold from it. That's right, if one were to look from his perspective, it's something like how a man entered his fiancée's house. With that, it's natural for him to get worried. I've written about how Leo-san had such kind of personality, but it was true that he approached me. Though he is withdrawing for the time being, I don't understand whether he's serious or not. Yes, I really have to be more careful.

Now then, let's continue.

Uhm, what's written next is... I'm giving you something that a foreign merchant brought to me. I think that it will surely suit you well, so please accept it. I stopped reading at this point and picked up the box. It's not quite an easy task for a man to choose and give something to a woman. There's no such thing as, 'As long as it fits my taste, then it will fit her taste, too.' Ah-, but if it's Taiga-san, I get the feeling that he chooses something after listening to various suggestions from the merchant.

"Something that suits me... is it? I wonder what is it?"

I slowly unwrapped the golden ribbon. Since there is no tape over here although there is glue, it seems that the box was packed with a wrapping paper that was pasted with glue on several parts, then they put a string or ribbon on top of it.

I removed the wrapping paper that was fixed with the glue and softly opened the box's lid. I took out the thing that was wrapped up in a soft paper from inside.

The thing that came out from inside the paper was a hair ornament that took shape of a flower. It was made using a fine craftsmanship of gold and silver, and there was a blue jewel embedded in the flower's core. This might be the same jewel that's attached in my amulet ring. Taiga-san, you made it a complete set, huh.

“Ah. What a cute hair ornament it is, right, Seiren-sama?”

“The gold and silver were used beautifully, huh?”

Alica-san and Minoa-san raised their voices in admiration. I also understand that it is pretty, so it seems that it looks even more amazing to the two of them who are women in the first place.

When I tried to take it out so that everyone could see it well, they seemed to be having fun since all of them are women. Nah, I was the one who received it, though, oh well. Since I won't be able to see the hair ornament that was put on my hair without the help of a mirror, it feels the best when I can make the others happy from just seeing it.

Then, Kuon-sensei narrowed her eyes as if she just noticed something.

“Oh dear. Taiga-sama seems to be greatly worried about Seiren-sama, huh?”

“Eh?”

“Look, here.”

Kuon-sensei pointed something at me. Next to the golden flower, there was a small insect made out of silver. Wait, its forefeet were moderately long, doesn't it look like a praying mantis this way? Its features are deformed, though, but it looks strong. Red stones were embedded in its eyes parts.

“This is a carnivorous insect. It's said to be a good luck charm so that his lover won't be approached by insects.”

I finally opened my eyes wide at Sensei's explanation.

So that I won't be approached by insects.

I was turned to be a man so that I won't be approached by insects and then I was also tossed off to another world. Taiga-san knows about it.

In a sense, I'm supposed to feel something that's similar to a slight trauma at the word “insect”.

However, I felt fine somehow at the good luck charm that Taiga-san gave to me. After all, Taiga-san is a person who accepts me even after knowing everything about me. The insect that gets attached to me—Taiga-san alone is enough. Yup.

“Seiren-sama. Since it has come to this, why don't you try putting it on?”

Alica-san then suggested it to me. Since it's something that was given to me with troubles, so I ought to try it once.

“Ah, yup. Alica-san, please help me.”

“Yes.”

I didn't say anything at Minoa-san who had been preparing even before listening to my answer and at Kuon-sensei who tidied up the table. Uhm, well, it's quite obvious for someone to just go along with the proposed suggestion during times like this, right? I carelessly assumed it like that, but there's nothing I have to worry about, right?

When it was time for dinner, I went down the stairs. When I just left the hall, I heard a voice calling out to me, “Seiren-cha-n!” There is only one person who'd address me like that ever since I came here. I answered, “Yes?” and turned around.

“That hair ornament is cute. It suits you well.”

“Eh? T-thank you.”

Leo-san pinpointed my hair ornament as he checked it out. This kind of person also has a wonderful observation power, huh? Leo-san approached me along with Ayato-san and Maito-san. I became slightly scared and pulled my body back. Perhaps he noticed it and stopped shortly afterward. No matter how you look at it, it's not because Minoa-san's glaring at him, right?

“Fufu, good things suit adorable girls really well. Is that a present from your fiancée?”

“Eh, you could tell?”

“I can tell. It has an insect that repels other insects, after all.”

Did you manage to check the ornament to this extent? Really, he's a good observer.

Speaking of which, there was also a certain keyholder typically attached to my female classmates' bags or cellphones, and it was quite popular at that time. In this case, I can't really tell if Leo-san is more or less at the same level as those girls, though.

“It's all right. I won't try to swarm around Seiren-chan anymore. I can even swear it to myself and to the God of Sun.”

Leo-san swung both of his hands as if he was quite troubled. Well, for the



time being, I think that it's fine for me to believe his statement just now.  
Or perhaps I should say, so he has a self-consciousness that he himself is the  
swarming insect?

## Chapter 66: Let's Go, to The Autumn Harvest Festival

“Seiren-chan, Saryuu-chan. What are you going to do during the Autumn Festival?”

Leo-san said that when we were eating desserts after dinner. Today's dessert is a pudding. The taste doesn't differ that much from the pudding from the other world, so I think that the way of making it is quite similar, too. The apple pear-like fruit riding on top of it tastes refreshing, sweet, and delicious, too. Setting that aside, how should I answer that question? Before I could even think of it, Saryuu answered.

“The Autumn Festival, is it? I think that I'd like to go out to play in the downtown, what about Ane-sama?”

“About that, Seiren-chan. Is your fiance going to come here?”

“I'm also wondering about what I should do. I'm thinking to go over there, but I'm not sure.”

I answered while thinking that I'd like to ask Taiga-san what he's going to do at that time. Taiga-san has been so busy ever since that time—and we haven't met during all this time.

Just like spring, there's a harvest festival in autumn, too. When summer passed by and when I first thought of it, the first thing that appeared in my mind was that I'd like to go there with Taiga-san. I wonder since when have I become like this, though?

During the spring festival, I haven't met Taiga-san at all, and I don't know what's there on the left side or the right side when I first came here. Meanwhile, during summer, I stayed in the villa.

Still, now that there's another harvest festival, I think that I'd really like to see it together. Seeing the harvest festival at the Shiiya's fine, but if possible, I'd also like to see the one at the Shikino's.

“Hm. Certainly, it's not bad to see the one at the Shikino's once.”

“That's right. But the Shikino residence seems to be quite busy with all the formalities of the head of family's transfer of control.”

“If that’s the case, then it’s even worse. If they’re that busy, it’s most likely that Taiga-dono won’t be able to get away from their residence.”

Towards Tou-san who nodded and Leo-san who furrowed his brows, Kaa-san’s answer was somehow so flat. I wonder if Kaa-san married Tou-san who was 8 years older than her during such a busy time like this? ...It’s not like we can just collect our luggage and intrude on them unexpectedly, right?

Still, Leo-san’s words lingered in my mind. I mean, if I were to go there to play when Taiga-san is still busy with work, won’t I just be in the way?

“Yes... But if he’s indeed busy, I wonder if it’s fine for me to go there?”

“Wouldn’t that be okay? Your fiance, if he sees your face, Seiren-chan, then he’d surely work even harder. Wasn’t that also the case with Mondo-ojisan?”

“Yes. Looking at Maya’s face when I was busy, I then thought to myself that I’d need to work harder because I’d like to see her face more often. Wait, what did I just say?”

“Oh my, not only Seiren-chan, but Ojisan and Obasan are also very passionate, huh. ...Saryuu-chan, what’s wrong?”

*“cough cough cough...N-nothing!”*

Well, I understand Saryuu’s feelings so well and why he choked over it. After all, Tou-san just flirted while looking at Kaa-san just now. Kaa-san also smiled, and she seemed very happy.

I was slightly worried over them being such doting parents, but it’s good for them to be such an intimate married couple. After all, I didn’t know my parents at all before I came here. Yes.

Or perhaps I should say, I wonder if Taiga-san would be lively if he sees my face? I wonder if he’s working hard with his job?

“I-if that’s the case... I think I’ll try to discuss it a bit.”

“That’s right. We also have to consider their sides of circumstances as well.”

Yes, yes. When I looked at Leo-san’s face that seemed happy, how should I put it, I feel quite relieved.

...But I wonder why does Leo-san care so much about it? Does he unexpectedly have the disposition to take care of the others?

Speaking of which, I still feel like everything isn’t proceeding so smoothly, though. When I thought to examine Leo-san’s expression carefully, he readily

blurted out his real intention.

“I mean... There’s no reason to keep silent about it, so I’ll just say it. I’m actually thinking of going to see the festival at the territory of Shikino. Since Seiren-chan is going, is it okay for me to also intrude on?”

“Leo-san, too? Why?”

“It’s mood, I just get the mood to do it. Since I still have one week, I’m planning to see it on my own-.”

Then, he gulped his pudding in one go. After that, I’m not sure if it’s because the pudding is delicious or if it’s because he’s having fun, but he’s smiling. But still, I see. So, Leo-san is also coming...? Incomprehensible feelings welled up in my chest as I’m not sure if I should be dejected or be happy. Nah, why would I be happy, though?

When I switched my gaze in a hurry, my eyes met with Tou-san who seemed to be satisfied. As for Tou-san, he seemed to be fine with me going to meet Taiga-san. I think it’s because he has personally experienced the feelings of wanting to work harder after looking at Kaa-san’s face.

“Maya and I will be staying in the mansion. As for Seiren and Saryuu, do as you like.”

“That’s right. Especially Seiren, I think that it’s fine for you to see the territory of Shikino at least once. In addition, you’d be able to see the way Taiga-dono works.”

“Ah, yes. Then, I’ll send out a letter to tell him of my plan.”

When I reflexively answered Kaa-san’s words as if it was natural, I finally noticed.

Everyone’s gaze hurt—they seemed to be telling me, “Aren’t you so full of spirit to go there?” Nah, I mean, isn’t that obvious?

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Anyway, the answer to letter that I sent out—which contained that matter—finally arrived the next day’s noon. Which means, did he just use the same day service again after a while? No, even though I have told him not to use it... while thinking about it, I gave some snacks and tea to the postman who delivered the letter, and then I returned to my room cheerfully. There, I opened the letter. Regarding Taiga-san’s reply, it goes without saying that everyone else nodded

and just said, “Ah-, as expected.” As for his writing, it’s still neat as usual, but I can tell that he’s in a high spirit. Oi, oi.

“Please feel free to come. We’ll be preparing the rooms, so he said. It’s also written that I can go together with Saryuu as well.”

“That’s good to know-. Then, let’s prepare for it immediately.”

“We have properly dried the baskets that are used to pack the luggage, so they’re ready to be used at anytime.”

Oriza-san smiled and assumed a triumphant pose. Alica-san took out the baskets that were used for summer as well, as if it was a natural thing to do. Or rather, everyone didn’t seem to consider that Taiga-san would turn down my plan, huh? I... Well, I also think that I’d be shocked if he were to tell me “no”. So, I asked Oriza-san to call Saryuu. I thought that I’d just go by myself for this kind of thing if it was the usual—but it seemed obvious to people over here that it should be the other way round, where the junior got called to the senior’s room. Since I’m Saryuu’s big sister, then I’m the senior here, or so it seems. Because of that rule, I have never seen Saryuu’s room. I wonder how does a room that belongs to a boy around his age feel like in this world? I wonder if I should try taking a look at it using that as a pretext?

“Eh, so I can also tag along?!”

“Yes.”

When I informed about the letter to Saryuu who just came after being called over here, he showed an enthusiastic expression. I wonder for which reason is he getting all enthusiastic over? Is it because he could go to the Shikino’s residence, or is it because he’s coming along with me? Nah, it doesn’t feel bad to have a little brother that has a siscon, though. I had some sworn brothers when I was in the other world, but they were just unrelated people that lived along with me.

Besides, it was the house in which Saryuu was born and raised in for quite a while. I also think that it’s good for him to be able to go there once—or rather, to go home. Also.

“The wet nurse who raised Saryuu is still there in the Shikino’s residence, so I heard. Wouldn’t that be nice of you to see her after a long time?”

“You mean Saya? Yes, I’ll do that.”

Yup, he seems to be happy, indeed.

I guess it's around the same degree of happiness that I felt when I met the orphanage director again, and more than it, he'll surely be looking forward to it. Well, to be honest, I also would like to see what kind of person is that little sister of Kaya-san.

When I came down for dinner together with Oriza-san and the others, I met with Leo-san again. Perhaps it was easy for us to meet, judging by our mobilization time. "Yahhoo-!" Leo-san waved his hand and narrowed his eyes to look at my face. Eh, what's wrong?

"Ah, Leo-san."

"Judging from your expression, it seemed like he answered with an [OK], right?"

"Yes. Saryuu is also coming along with me."

Nn, which means, am I still grinning right now? That's weird, I have definitely checked my own face in front of the mirror before leaving my room.

I slightly averted my gaze as I felt my face was getting a bit hotter.

"That's good, Seiren-chan. Saryuu-chan is also going to return home, right?"

"Yes. It seems that his wet nurse is still in the Shikino's residence as well."

"Oh my, that's nice. He's supposed to be much obliged to that wet nurse, right?"

That's right. The feudal lords in this world weren't raised personally by their parents, and that seems to be very natural. It's fine for Saryuu to meet Saya-san, but it might make his biological mother a little bit lonely. However, Saryuu's biological mother has passed away, if I'm not mistaken.

As for my own mother... she might not raise me personally, but she gave a ring to me and embroidered my name on my pajamas. When I was shown the small one piece that the orphanage director left behind, to be honest, it didn't seem to be made so skillfully. However, I understood that it was sewn with her utmost effort, so I was really happy.

Wait, speaking of which, Leo-san has ever mentioned that he'd come to the territory of Shikino, right?

"When will Leo-san go there?"

"It's a secret-. Even men have secrets."

He smoothly brushed me off. Truthfully, this person seems to have lots of secrets. It's the same with his family name, but for that one, it seems to be kept a secret only from me.

However, I really don't understand what he's doing in the mansion or anything like that. I think that it is amazing in a sense.

"Aah, right, right."

Leo-san clapped his hands as if he just remembered something after hearing my question. He then stared at me fixedly with a serious face. Eh, is it a very important talk?

"It's the same with when you're in the mansion, but since you're particularly going over there, don't get separated from everyone else, okay? Seiren-chan is the center of attention right now, after all."

"The center of attention, me?"

"That's right. Because you're Shiiya family's daughter whose figure had never seen until just recently."

"Y-yeah..."

Even during the debut party, all the invitees were looking at me. I wonder if they're that curious of me...?

"You know that the Shiiya family is the royal family's relative, right?"

"Ah, yes. I heard that we have the right to inherit the throne, more or less."

"Yes."

Leo-san nodded with a serious expression, and then he told me something else with a slightly faint voice.

"For a feudal lord of a border, having a right to the throne is something quite amazing. It doesn't seem to be the case these days, but there was a period where there were feudal lords—who were relatives to the royal family—put on air and acted haughtily."

"Haa... it's troublesome, huh?"

"It's troublesome, right? Though they were putting on airs, there were still lots of things they needed to do. There were still a lot of family heads that still didn't understand of such matters."

That is, well, since they are in charge of managing the territory, it's natural

that they have to work hard for the territory, or else, it won't be good. Though it's even harder to actually do the concrete thing rather than only talking about it.

Still, for example, if the agricultural production resulted in poor crops, then the one who had to do follow-up and arrangements for food should be the feudal lord. Also, I wonder if they don't have to worry about their everyday necessities and their work just because they are the royal family's relatives? If they're just putting on airs, the king would surely abandon them, right?

...Wait, could it be that the ancestors of the Shiiya family also thoughtlessly put on airs? Uwaa, I don't even want to think of it, as I'm also one of their descendants.

"Ah, the young feudal lord of the Shikino should be fine from that matter. Since he had been so lively even during the previous family head's period and often patrolled around the town, he was exceptionally popular among the population of the fief. Seiren-chan, you met a good person, huh?"

"Eh... Ah, yes."

Is that so? He's indeed a good-natured person. I'm glad. From my perspective, he was quite an aggressive person, or so was my first impression of him, but even so, I saw that as one of his strong points.

By the way, is it quite similar to historical dramas about how he patrolled around the town? No, since everyone knows of his identity, I think it's different. But surprisingly, a spy that's working for the higher-ups really exist here.

"Ah, but well. I have said this earlier too, but Seiren-chan, since you're an unmarried woman that possesses the royal family's blood, you'll certainly be the center of attention, so there might be some people who'd want to snatch you later on. Be careful about that, okay?"

"...People like Leo-san, huh?"

"Unn, really, I'm sorry about it. It was really my fault."

He lowered his head. But well, if he was really serious about it, doesn't that mean he deserves to be condemned more than this?

"No, that's enough. It's okay."

"Really? Thanks... I'm telling you I won't hug you."

"I can't believe you. Especially, what's up with your hands?"



“Oh my, I’m sorry.”

Leo-san let go of his hand which was about to circle around my shoulders. Really, I can’t believe him for the time being. Oriza-san was already preparing to throw something to him even when she was smiling. Well, but before that, Ayato-san might have defended with his hands, though.

But still, I see. It doesn’t have anything to do with my personality, and it isn’t weird for me to be targeted, huh?

I have to be really careful. I also don’t want to trouble Taiga-san, as well.

## Chapter 67: Going to Fiance's Residence

The day before the Week of the Autumn Banquet, Saryuu and I headed towards the territory of Shikino by carriage. As usual, the servants are accompanying us in the wagon.

“Seiren, Saryuu. Give my greetings to Taiga-dono.”

“Don't raise too much trouble for them, okay?”

“Yes.”

“Yes-.”

When we were about to go out from the mansion, Tou-san and Kaa-san, and Leo-san who seemed to not go yet, they all went to send us off. However, let's put aside Tou-san... Kaa-san, we 're already at this age, so of course we understand about it.

Anyway, Leo-san lightly tapped my head and Saryuu's, and then he winked. Somehow, to put it frankly, this person is amazing enough because such kind of a gesture matches him so well.

“The two of you, have a safe tri~p! I will also go there soon.”

“I think it would be better to go there with a more plain look, Leo-san.”

“I will be careful, fufu.”

Nah, is it that weird for you to just dress a little more plain? No matter how I look at it, that's what I thought as I saw Leo-san who was wearing a glittering clothes that was just as sparkling as a chandelier. Or rather, the reflection from the morning sun is too radiant.

Anyway, thanks to the carriage proceeding slowly, this time, I didn't get sick at all. Compared to when we went to the villa, the road this time looked even bigger and was well-maintained. Though the road was without any stone paving, it was still properly made smooth, huh.

We took an afternoon break at a village en route and ate our lunch there. Perhaps due to autumn, there were lots of seasonal vegetables being cooked by boiling or stewing, and they were so delicious.

Oh, as expected, Taiga-san was so busy that he didn't come here. Though I'd

honestly get mad if he were to descend with Genjiro from above. We went out of the village and arrived at the Shikino's residence at approximately 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The fence surrounding the mansion was stone-built and its height reached around our shoulders, meanwhile there were the so-called iron bars lined up on top of it. Of course, the tip of it was made very sharp.

When I looked at the residence at a glance, the difference I could tell from our residence was that the Shikino-san's residence was a single-storied house. In exchange to that, the residence was quite huge and that's why, it might seem a lot bigger than our house. Well, our house is a 3-storied building, though.

"Hee, so the Shikino mansion is a one-story house, huh?"

"Yeah, that's right. We seemed to start from an ordinary village headman, so whenever there was an expansion, it was built sideways from the main house."  
"Ah-."

When I was admiring the mansion, Saryuu who was originally a child of this house told me of it. ...Could it be that Touka-san had a complex towards the Shiiya family? When I still had the name Shikino, I also had something similar to a complex towards the other children that were rich, or rather, that had normal parents and came from an ordinary household. But now, I don't have that consciousness anymore.

While we were conversing about that matter, the carriage entered the mansion grounds from the gate. It went forward for a little bit more before stopping at the mansion's entrance.

A huge roof just like the one in our home was sticking out, and it was made like that in order to not let any guests get wet from the rain or snow. Under that roof, there were several servants and employees lined up in front of the door. Anyway, even from a distant view, I could tell that Taiga-san was fidgeting around in front of them. Nah, I'm also fidgeting now, though.

When the door of the stopped carriage was opened, Taiga-san immediately extended his hand to me. Whoa, his whole face was smiling! I'm so glad I decided to come here.

"Seiren-sama!"

"Taiga-san, long time no see."

Without thinking over it, I took Taiga-san's hand and went down from the carriage. Ah-, both of his face and his voice were bright, really, this Taiga-san.

"I missed you."

"Me too, Seiren-sama."

When I voiced my honest feeling, Taiga-san also nodded. Hehe, I'm so happy. ...Anyway, this seems to be the so-called [typical woman in love], huh? I become unable to see anything else in my surroundings, yup. That's why, it completely slipped my head that I was riding the carriage along with Saryuu.

"Ane-sama, Nii-sama. I understand very well that you two are happy to meet each other after such a long time, but doing that in front of the entrance, it's a bit..."

"Oh."

"Mm. I-I will be more careful."

It is terribly pathetic for a biological brother whose age is quite far older and for an elder stepsister to get lectured by the little brother who showed a stunned expression. Nah really, I seriously wasn't able to see my surroundings. After straightening himself in a fluster, Taiga-san faced us again. When he looks like this, it's easy to see that he is really a young feudal lord. Uhm, it feels like his solemnity is coming out. Yup.

"Seiren-sama, welcome to the Shikino mansion. Saryuu, you've come as well, huh?"

"Yes. Since I've decided that I'd protect Ane-sama until Ane-sama gets married to Nii-sama."

"Hahaha, you should find your own princess soon, okay?"

"Ugh..."

Yes, I also think so. Nonetheless, Saryuu doesn't seem to socialize with women that much, other than me, Kaa-san, and the maids—I wonder what should we do? Will he find her during the Spring and Autumn Festival, or will he find her through a matchmaking?

...Since there's the problem of his partner's house, I bet it'd be through a matchmaking.

“Now then, you must be tired from the long trip. The loading of the luggage seems to be finished, so let us guide you to the prepared room. Saya.”

“Yes.”

When Taiga-san called, a nearby maid-san quickly stepped forward. The outfit used by the Shikino’s maid-san had a basic strong green tone, and I feel refreshed from looking at it, as I was so used to seeing blue uniform.

Since she was called Saya, that means... this person is Kaya-san’s little sister, isn’t she? Yup, her overall aura is similar to Kaya-san. Kaya-san has a bulky and heavy atmosphere around her, but this Saya-san feels like she has a solid core. Uhm, I can’t really describe it well.

Wait, just when did the luggage get carried in...? When I thought of it, I came to realize... Just when did the servants who were lined up behind Taiga-san suddenly vanish? The servants and their wagon that came here together with the carriage where Saryuu and I was in—I also can’t see their figures at all.

Eh-, could it happen during the time when I was unable to see my surroundings? Awesome. Or rather, just to what extent did I doze off in my happiness? From the other’s point of view, it would seem like I was a young girl who dozed off in her happiness from finally meeting her good-looking fiance after a long time... I’m extremely embarrassed now, oi!

W-well, let’s set aside my own embarrassment for now.

“Saya, you look so lively as always.”

Saya-san was the one who worked as Saryuu’s wet nurse. To Saryuu, she seemed to be a foster parent who raised him. That might be why he greeted her in a very delightful tone.

Uhm, I somehow understand. I also got very happy when I met again with the orphanage director who raised me, after not seeing him for quite a long time.

“Yes. Saryuu-sama also looks to be full of spirit, I’m so glad.”

“Yes. This is Seiren-neesama. She’s my kind elder sister.”

“I wonder if I’m kind, though...? I’m Seiren, please take care of me.”

“I’m Saya. Welcome, and please enjoy your stay.”

When I bowed after Saryuu did, Saya-san also bowed her head deeply. Aah yeah, I feel like somehow I can understand why she was nominated as Saryuu’s wet nurse. It’s only my vague hunch, though.

When Saya-san raised her head, Taiga-san instructed her to guide us around. Hearing that, I received a little damage.

“Go and guide Seiren-sama and Saryuu to their respective rooms. I still have a meeting with a village headman that I should attend after this.”

“Eh, you still have some work to do?”

“Yes. I’m really sorry. Actually, I must be the one to guide you there, but...”

Is that so? Taiga-san seems to be seriously depressed. I can’t, I can’t, I must not let him get depressed. I must try to cheer him up.

“...No problem. Take care, and please do your best at work.”

“Yes. Then, I’m off.”

When I smiled with all of my might, Taiga-san’s face got brighter as well. Is it fine for him to be this simple even though he is already in his early thirties? Well, for the time being, it’s good that he seems to get motivated. All of us sent him off as he went away while riding Genjirou—it’s a figure that I haven’t seen in a long time.

## Chapter 68: Calm Down, At Fiance's Residence

After Genjiro's figure could no longer be seen, I turned to face Saya again. I have something that I've been wanting to tell her from when we met before.

"Uhm, Saya-san. Thank you very much for raising Saryuu to be a good person. As his big sister, I'm so happy that a good heir has come to our Shiiya residence."

"Eh?"

Oh my, she's surprised. Uhm, I haven't said anything weird, right? Could it be that she would get scolded by Kaya-san if Kaya-san were to find out... Nah, there's no way. After all, Kaya-san wants Saryuu to succeed Shiiya house. Uhm, I can't understand it well.

Aah, that's right. I still have something to say about Kaya-san.

"Also, I've been indebted to your big sister, Kaya-san."

Ah, yeah. Is my sister doing well?"

"Yes. She has been working hard by my mother's side."

I was only indebted to her when I went to drink tea at my mother's room, but I can somehow understand that the Shiiya residence's maids have been working so hard because Kaya-san has been working so hard, as well. In a sense, it feels like a good office, yes, that kind of feeling.

Still, though I only said that without telling her any details, Saya-san put her hand on her chest, as if she was feeling relieved.

"Then, I'm glad. To be honest, my elder sister has a little exaggerated favoritism, so I'm quite troubled."

"Ah, is that so?"

"Kaya seems to be thinking that she has to raise me well as the Shiiya family's heir. Even I have an awareness about it."

Hearing Saryuu's murmur as if he was amazed, I heaved a sigh only inside my own chest.

Oi, oi. Could it be that Saya-san is troubled that Kaya-san favors Saryuu too much? It seems somewhat terrible.

Once I get home, I think I should indirectly tell her about it. Yes, not directly to her, but I'll tell that to my mother. Kaya-san might scowl at me again, and it might not be what I hoped for, but if that's the case, fine then. No matter what, it's not like I'd succeed the house.

Perhaps thanks to Saryuu's words, Saya-san pulled herself together and raised her face. That's right, she needs to guide me and Saryuu around here.

"A-at any rate, let me guide you. Seiren-sama will use the guest room, meanwhile, Saryuu-sama, please stay in the room that you used to use in the past."

"Eh, you're leaving the room as it was?"

"We changed the interior, though."

At Saya-san's answer, Saryuu suddenly turned cheerful.

I see, so his so-called child's room still remained. My room was also left as it was in order for me to use when I returned home, but it seems that the same principle was also used in the Shikino mansion.

So that it could be used for Saryuu to stay in, whenever he came to visit like this.

In the first place, this was his own home, so that should be good. Yup.

After entering the center part of the mansion from the entranceway, as expected, there's a hall. The residence space seems to be concentrated at the east side, so we proceeded towards that direction from the hall.

When we went deeper with Saya-san taking the lead, there were Oriza-san and one of the Shikino's maid already waiting for us. The maid has a tall and slender stature, with her ponytailed black hair that has no crease. There was a strange glint in her eyes that seemed to be quite sharp.

Then, she wears a black clothes under her green maid uniform. Her legs are exposed, but well, that's normal. However, the bottom of her neck and her wrists can also be seen. Nah, it's fine since it looks quite stylish, though.

When Saya-san stepped forward next to her side, she turned around and faced us.

"There's a guest room beyond this area. This Fubuki was pointed to be in charge of the things related to the guest room that's going to be used for Seiren-sama."



“I’m in charge of assisting and guiding you to the guest room. My name is Fubuki. Please do not hesitate to order anything from me.”

“Thank you, I’ll be in your care. Oriza-san, I’ve made you wait, huh?”

“Ye-s. Alica and Minoa are currently finishing the preparations inside the room-.”

The maid who introduced herself as Fubuki deeply bowed her head. It was quite a contrast to Oriza-san who was nonchalantly laughing as usual beside her. It might be quite interesting to look at them.

“Then, I will guide Saryuu-sama to your room. Please follow me.”

“I understand. Well then, until later, Ane-sama!”

“Yes, see you later.”

I waved my hand and separated ways with Saryuu over there. The family residential area seems to diverge from this point. Because we can only walk sideways, it seems quite far.

Anyway, Oriza-san and I followed Fubuki-san to walk further inside. Since there are no stairs, the hallway is a bit long, but since the wall and the ceiling are uniformly white-colored, it doesn’t feel gloomy walking through the wall. Meanwhile, the pillars have a slightly strong brown color, adding to the liveliness.

Also, in comparison to the Shiiya mansion, the carpet here is a little bit thicker. Since it seems like I might trip over it if I don’t get used to it, I walk carefully. Along the way, Fubuki-san talked about various things.

“Taiga-sama has ordered me many times over to take good care of Seiren-sama. Therefore, please feel at ease.”

“Really, I’m much obliged to you. Taiga-san is quite busy, right?”

“Yes. Although the transfer of control from the previous head has almost ended, since it’s about time to harvest the crops from within the territory, there are still many things to take care of, such as tax calculation.”

“And that’s why he’s meeting with the village headman?”

As I was tilting my head, wondering if the meeting was to talk about the tax calculation, Oriza-san explained it to me.

“Seiren-sama. If I’m not mistaken, there was an area that suffered from flood

(Oomizu) in the Shikino territory 2 years ago.”

“Oomizu... Aah, do you mean a flood (Kouzui)?”

With that, I understood.

I have seen it several times at the news in the other world, but after the water from the flood faded away, that’s the end—no, it’s not. Because of the flood, the crops that grew in the field for growing fruits and vegetables, as well as the paddy field—all of them mostly got spoiled. Then, the farmers wouldn’t have their income. Not just for that day, but their life after that becomes even harder.

In the other world, the government’s supposed to issue some subsidy or money for them... Could it be that Taiga-san went out to have a meeting with the village headman in relation to that matter?

“Yes. And so, the village headman went to borrow some loan to be used for funding and supplying the people’s livelihood for the last 2 years. The village headman’s about to repay the loan that was used to purchase agricultural machinery and equipment.”

“I see. Even though it has been 2 years ago, things are still quite difficult now, huh?”

As for the agricultural machinery and equipment, there’s no way it’s a tractor, right? Perhaps it’s something that the horses can pull. The tools they used before must have been washed away and destroyed by the flood, along with the fields.

Anyway, the money that was used to buy new ones, huh? Since the earned money should be used for their life expenses first, the payment of debts must wait until later on, is it?

The orphanage director had ever taken two or more part-time jobs in order to pay the debt, if I’m not mistaken. I also helped him a little bit at that time.

“I’m saved the trouble because you’re quick to understand it. And then, around that time, we have also received some support goods and fund loans from the Shiiya, so our previous head of family was really saved thanks to that as well.”

“Is that so? I was still away from the mansion at that time, so I don’t know the details.”

I see, I see.

I hope that the fields could recover in just one or two years, but the degree of recovery varies based on the place too, right? If it's located deep in the mountains, the road might have crumbled already.

I think it might be quite difficult to arrange everything with the village headman. Taiga-san, I hope you can do it properly.

Or anyway, so Touka-san also properly did his duties as the feudal lord, huh? Tou-san and Kaa-san also cooperated. If the incident with me never happened, Touka-san will still remain as Touya-san by now, and he might still sit in his feudal lord position as usual. I wonder how did things turn out this way?

"Seiren-sama. Your room's been prepared, please come in."

While we were talking about it, we finally arrived in the guest room where I'll be staying in. Alica-san greeted me outside and opened the firm wooden door for me to come inside.

Right after entering from the entrance door, there was another door next to the room. It seems that there's another room at the opposite side, and it seems to be located slightly further inside after I open the door. When I tried to peek at the room, there are table and sofa, and then a small bed further inside. Minoa-san who was unwrapping her own luggage noticed me and turned up in a fluster.

"Ah, Seiren-sama?! I apologize for not going out to greet you!"

"No, it's fine. By the way, this room over here is...?"

"Aah, it seems to be a room made for the servants to use."

"Yes. In Shikino, the servants and employees who are accompanying the guests will be using this front room."

Fubuki-san took over Minoa-san's explanation. Wa-, a dedicated room, huh?

"There were various things happening in the Shikino in the past, so we have considered the security of the family members and the guests by inventing this room that could be used by their bodyguards. We haven't reached the stage where we'd be able to pile up magic barriers just like in the Shiiya mansion."

I see. Unlike the arrangement at our house, Oriza-san and the others would stay here near my vicinity.

Well, the security at our house is too strong, but perhaps it's because there was that incident with me. I can't talk much about it, then.

Anyway, inside the front room used by the maids, there seems to be things that can be used to prepare for tea and many other things. In our house, we have to bring the hot water from the kitchen or the bathroom each time, but for things like this, I guess we can follow the Shikino's example.

"Well then, please go back to the inner room."

Fubuki-san lent me her hand as I passed by the front room and entered the guest room. There are table, sofa, dressers and many other things—every necessary things are all present here. The thing that separated the bedroom wasn't the wall and a door, but instead, there was a big partitioning screen dividing the area.

The maids explained the interior to me, such as how the bathroom and the toilet were located deeper in the back, and then about the time for meal.

"We'll have breakfast at 8 o'clock, lunch at 12 o'clock, and dinner at 7 o'clock in the night. You can follow the person who'll come here to escort you until the dining room."

"Thank you very much."

The time is not that different from ours. Or rather, I think that we will need approximately the same amount of time to prepare for many things, and that schedule was made so that in the meantime, the servants could clean up the room and also have their own meals—or else, it'd be an irrational schedule for them.

As Alica-san has already prepared the tea, I sat down on the sofa. Oh, it's a bit hard, but it's perfectly comfortable to sit in. It might be because its height is compatible enough for me to use.

## Chapter 69: Being Careful, At Fiance's Residence

After receiving a brief explanation, Fubuki-san formally said to me, "I have a request to ask of Seiren-sama."

"On the first day of the Autumn Harvest Festival, our head of the family would go out in public to give his greetings. Sorry for being so sudden, but would Seiren-sama also come along, if you don't mind?"

"Eh?"

The first day of the festival, isn't it tomorrow? It is really so sudden... but, why?

"Taiga-sama seems like he wants to introduce Seiren-sama to the fief population before the marriage ceremony, by all means."

"To put it simply, Taiga-sama wants to boast about Seiren-sama, right?"

"Though the wording is a bit..., yes, that's correct."

Oriza-san's way of talking is so casual, right? And then, you're not going to deny it, huh, Fubuki-san?! With her expression remained serious, there's no way I could comment about it.

Ah uhm, in other words, I'm being asked to come out in front of the fief population as Taiga-san's fiancée, huh?

When I realized it, my face turned hot. Whoa, is this what the idols in the other world feel when they were asked to have a public interview by the journalists?

No, I'm not even an idol, though.

"In addition, I think he's quite worried about Seiren-sama's safety and that he wants you to be by his side as much as possible, as he'd like to protect you."

"My safety?"

"Yes. I can't say this loudly, but..."

Oops. Because Fubuki-san strangely has a very serious expression and seems to be glaring at something, I quickly touched up my makeup. Eh wait, it was all good.

After confirming that my maids have also gathered and surrounded us, Fubuki-san told us in a small voice.

“When the previous head of the family retired, there were lots of his dismissed subordinates. Taiga-sama said that it was done in order to tighten the financial affairs, since they received such a high salary, in comparison to the work they actually did, but...”

Which means, she’s referring to Touka-san’s subordinates, huh? I guess there are reasons other than their unreasonably high salary.

...Which means, it’s about me, huh? And, about the orphanage director. And perhaps, about the orphanage director’s mother and Touka-san’s mother, too. No, I think that the last matter shouldn’t be taken into the matter, though.

“However, it seems that there is a slightly suspicious movement in the vicinity of those dismissed subordinates. Please be very careful. I’ve been strictly ordered by Taiga-sama to not neglect informing you of this matter.”

“...Yes. Thank you, I understand. I will definitely be very careful.”

Anyway, I obediently accepted Fubuki-san’s advice.

Taiga-san has properly informed me of the circumstances around his area, that’s why he’s telling me to be careful. If that’s the case, I also have to pull it together. It seems that things will be quite terrible if I were affected by another weird magic again, just like what happened in summer.

“Then, I will excuse myself now. If you’d like to order anything from the Shikino’s servants and employees, please press the bell in the front room.”

“I understand. Thanks for your kindness.”

When I answered like that, Fubuki-san deeply bowed again and went out of the guest room. A bell huh, I wonder how does it work?

“Aah, there’s a cord attached at the tassel in the front room, and the cord goes down. If we pull it, the bell in the Shikino’s employee room will ring, or so it seems.”

“I see.”

I tried asking Alica-san about it, and it seems to work like what she explained. I didn’t notice it, but there’s something like a tube where the cord is in, and the tube’s located close to the wall and ceiling, so it’s connected all the way to the other side.

Though the door and the wall are solid, this world doesn’t have something like a

telephone, huh. So, the bell used to call people like this is tied to a physical cord.

After the trivial questions have been answered, I began to think about the issues at my hand. At any rate, I don't have much to do until dinner. The meal time is clear, so before that, I think it's better for me to prepare and wipe my body.

"Uhm. In short, Taiga-san has dismissed the employees who did the mischievous conduct by Touka-san's side, and now this is the backlash as he's being resented in return, something like this, I think?"

"That's right. And perhaps I should add, Seiren-sama is the victim of their mischief."

"Well, that seems to be the case."

Yes, I don't have any kind of awareness about it. After all, I also didn't know anything about how I was tossed off to the other world and turned into a man before I returned here and returned to being a woman. No, the orphanage director was aware of it, though.

The only time when I received a direct harm was that summer incident, but in the end, it only ended as an attempt. No, I also think that I have a very thin sense of danger. I need to pull myself together, as danger lurks around with me being the Shiiya family's daughter and Taiga-san's fiancée. Yes.

"Hey. What do you think it means by a suspicious movement?"

"Uhm, exposing the true identity of the previous head of the family?"

"I see, obviously, they must be aware of his true identity, huh..."

Oriza-san's idea seems to be very unlikely, though.

Exposing the fact that the previous head wasn't Touya-san, but instead it was Touka-san who posed as Touya-san, huh. With that idea, it feels like they're aiming to get rid of the Shikino by exposing everything that has been done. It is said that it's not strange for people who have nowhere to go to be doing anything, huh? Things such as suicide bombing, or going to the grave together, or something like that?

"Also, there's that, huh-? Since Taiga-san seems strong, they seem to target Seiren-sama who was invited as a guest instead-."

That seems to be the case. I don't have any fighting ability, after all. Then, I'm also in a pathetic situation that has to receive protection from the maids and Taiga-san. Even when I was still a man, I wasn't really good at any physical exercises.

"Aah, it's also there in the book that Seiren-sama has read before. The book has a bad group that took a princess as their hostage, and if the other party didn't listen to what they said, the princess would be shoved into the obstacle that existed in front of them."

Minoa-san, that book that I read was a fiction, okay? It was just a made-up story, and there was no one who could actually destroy buildings in their anger in reality, okay? Nah, if it were to happen in real world, then we'd be facing opponents that are too out of our league, and nothing can be done about it.

"The one who saved the day wouldn't be limited only to Taiga-sana who played the role of the prince that came just right in the timing, right? In the first place, Seiren-sama has us accompanying her."

Alica-san smiled reassuringly and showed her well-developed biceps. No, I can't seem to see any well-formed muscles over there, though. Even in this world, it seems that it's common for people to be attracted by stories that portrayed a princess who was saved by the prince. Nah, at that time, I was really happy when he came just right at the perfect timing, though. ...In other words, I'm on the receiving end of someone else's help huh. Ah-, I feel down.

"...Really, just spare me. It's already quite troublesome being at the targetted side, and to begin with, I don't have any power to deal a counterattack, so I feel really depressed."

"There is no need for Seiren-sama to even raise her fists. After all, the three of us are here to do that."

"That's right. If you hit the villains, Seiren-sama's hands will get dirty-."

When I tried to honestly express my feelings, Minoa-san and Oriza-san answered as if it was natural for them. It seems that their answers are quite obvious because they're my exclusive maids who should be protecting me, so they only answered while thinking about their job.



Speaking of counterattack, I think I landed one.

“...Ah. I kicked Touka-san’s vital point, right?”

“It’s an emergency measure. There is no problem at all in your action.”

To the contrary, Alica-san’s nonchalant face when she said that seemed scary instead. No, I mean, the part that I kicked was his groin, after all.

Even though I landed that hit myself, more or less I could understand that pain, you know? Yes.

Even still... In such a situation where I might be targeted, by any chance, doesn’t that mean I’ve caused a trouble for Taiga-san?

“I wonder if I had better not come here...”

It seems that my feelings unconsciously escaped my lips. I could tell that the three of them simultaneously turned their gazes at me.

Among them, Minoa-san was the first one to speak.

“No, it doesn’t seem to be like that.”

“Eh?”

“Certainly, the magic protection in the Shikino’s mansion doesn’t reach the Shiiya family’s level, but the magic barrier was created at a normal level. In addition, the physical defense seems to be solid here.”

Minoa-san who said that tried to lightly hit the nearby wall. *Thud!* A dull voice could be heard. It seemed like a pretty sturdy wall, huh. In other words, there’s a defensive measure being put at an ordinary level, huh?

After that, Alica-san continued.

“Also, there’s Fubuki-san. She isn’t an ordinary person.”

“Eh, is that so?”

“Yes-. It’s only a probability, but-, I think that she’s an even match even for Minoa-.”

“I am confident that I’d win if we’re talking about power here. But I fear it if she’s using any kind of weapon.”

Oriza-san and Minoa-san calmly analyzed it. I felt somehow convinced with their analysis, though.

I mean, she has those excessively sharp eyes.

“Ah-, so when I thought that her eyes were strangely sharp, it’s about that, huh?”

I see. Just like Ayato-san and Maito-san who accompanied Leo-san, she is also a guard or someone who possesses skills around that area. That’s why, Taiga-san pointed her to be in charge of me. At the very least, it’s so that I could be protected inside the house.

“And then-, Seiren-sama.”

Amidst the oddly tense atmosphere, Oriza-san suddenly raised her bright voice. Ou, as everyone was surprised, the atmosphere changed completely in one go. Whoa-, I was totally nervous.

“Do you remember this-?”

“Hm?”

She handed over a small purple pouch. Inside, perhaps there could be a gem... Ah, I remembered.

“It’s the amulet that Jigen-san sold during the spring festival, right? If I’m not mistaken, it was sold for 350 ieno.”

“”Ooh, you even remember its price-!”

Jigen-san at that time was quite cute, wasn’t he? I was slightly surprised when I heard that he was selling the amulet like that every year. ...But, why is he still selling it until now?

“Jigen-san said that you should carry this close to you-.”

“It isn’t guaranteed that there won’t be any of Touka-san’s trusted retainer among the employees who weren’t dismissed. That’s why, this seems to be an amulet to protect you in the worst case.”

“Is that so? ...Yes, I understand. It’s quite strict, huh?”

I received Oriza-san and Alica-san’s words, and I somehow grasped that small pouch tightly. I see, this is an amulet, huh. Since Jigen-san told me to carry it, does that mean he inserted something to it?

Even so, we’re in a situation where we also have to be suspicious of the servants and employees here, huh? It’s a safety measure just in case Touka-san’s subordinate still remained and that they’d move to retaliate for Touka-

san, I guess?

Or rather, before Taiga-san became the head of the family, this house was full of such people, right? I think that Taiga-san has been working really hard so far.

“It might certainly be dangerous, but we are all here. If the bad guys appear, let’s consider it as a cleaning up before your marriage.”

“Oriza-san, your wording is so casual as always.”

“...This is Oriza’s strong point, and at the same time, it can be her bad point, as well.”

Minoa-san, I heard that you heaved a small sigh, you know? But still, I also think so.

Being unable to read the situation, should time and circumstances permit, it might even become a good thing. Yes.

## Chapter 70: Whisperingly, At Fiance's Residence

"Yo, Seiren."

I turned around as I heard my name being called. Over there, the orphanage director was standing while wearing his usual old clothes.

Eh, but this place is the house's entranceway, right? Why would the orphanage director be at this place?

"Director, didn't you return to the other world?"

"Yes, I did. But well, I'm still worried about you guys."

The way he scratches his head like that, yup, it's certainly the orphanage director. Or rather, I wonder for what reason did this person come here? I wonder if I'm still causing him to worry or any trouble even at this age? So I thought while staring fixedly at the director.

After that, the orphanage director turned to face me as if he just remembered something.

"Ah-, be careful of the Shikino's shinobi, okay? It's basically fine here, but there should be some who were Touka's confidants."

"Eh? Ah, yes."

By shinobi, did he mean ninja? And they really existed here, huh? Or rather, Touka-san's confidants, eh... In other words, they're his close subordinates, right? Isn't that bad, then?

A-anyway, I need to be more careful. Yup.

"Well then, until later. It's morning already-."

Perhaps feeling satisfied from having said everything that he wanted to tell me, the orphanage director smiled and then... *Thump!* I was pushed away and my falling down was stopped by the soft futon.

"...!"

When I jumped up in my surprise, I was inside the bed. It isn't the bed that I usually sleep in... oh right, I'm at Taiga-san's place. Yosh, it's a great thing that I inadvertently forgot to scream just now.

Ha-, as I breathed out, my eyes matched with Oriza-san's eyes as she peeked her face from the other side of the partitioning screen. Ah-, the louver door has been opened already, it seems. I slept like a log, huh? I wonder if I was tired.

"Ah. Seiren-sama, good morning-. Did you not have any dream last night?"  
".....Ah, morning."

As Oriza-san's voice can be distinguished easily, it clearly told me that I have returned back to reality.

Or rather, the orphanage director, so it was all a dream, huh? I have seen him in a dream before, too, but could he be very worried about me? Or am I bothering his mind?

When I scratched my hair, Alica-san made an appearance as well. Because the bedroom isn't separated by a wall to the living room, her figure can be seen immediately. Well, that's fine, though.

"Good morning, Seiren-sama. I will be bringing the hot water immediately."  
"Morning. Thank you-."

It has become quite a habit to bring hot water into the bed room to wash my face. When I was still at the institution, I brought a towel and a toothbrush all the way to the bathroom, and I washed my face with cold water, though. The institution, huh. Which reminds me, the orphanage director mentioned something in my dream, right? I wonder if the thing that he told me in my dream is actually real?

"Ah-, Oriza-san."  
"Yes, what is it-?"  
"You see, is it possible to convey a message via a dream?"  
"Yes?"

Among my maids, the one who is the most well-informed in terms of magic, the one who is completely having fun while studying it would be Oriza-san. Therefore, I thought that it was the best to try and ask her about it. And just like that, she immediately answered. She only stopped to think for an instant.

"Ah, such magic, it exists. However, there are lots of difficulties such as not being able to convey the message well, so it seems that it hasn't been put to

much practical use.”

“I see. Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it-.”

I see.

...However, the only magician that we have is Jigen-san. It isn’t weird for him to make a prank while laughing, “Hohoho!” I understand as much that he has an amazing ability that seems like a cheat. After all, he managed to find me who had been living in the different world as a man for about 18 years and he also managed to bring me back here.

Now then, as expected, Oriza-san also understood of the pattern that I used when I asked a strange thing. She tilted her head and asked me.

“Did you have that kind of a dream?”

“Perhaps. The orphanage director showed up in my dream.”

“Ah-.”

When I nodded and answered like that, Oriza-san only answered with a word. No, well, what else could she say in such a situation?

Anyway, just as our conversation stopped, Alica-san returned with a bucket of hot water and towel. Ah, I feel slightly relieved.

“I have brought the hot water. What’s wrong, Oriza?”

“Ah, Alica. You see, Siren-sama said that she had a dream. Uhm, of Touya-sama.”

“Eh? Ah.”

At Alica-san’s question that brought about a mysterious atmosphere to the air, Oriza-san lightly explained in plain words. When Oriza-san mentioned Touya-sama, she did it whisperingly.

Well, as expected, it’s a conversation that you wouldn’t want someone else other than Taiga-san to overhear in this Shikino residence. In the first place, Touka-san took over Touya-san’s place in public, so I’d be very troubled if someone considered me having dreams of that person. Yes, I’d be very troubled.

That’s why, I inched closer to Alica-san and told her in a small, small voice.

“In my dream, I was told to be careful since there might be Touka-san’s

subordinates among the Shikino's shinobi."

"...It's possible."

"Right-?"

I know, right?

Putting aside whether it's really a message conveyed via a dream, it isn't weird to know that there still remained Touka-san's people among the servants and employees that are currently working at the Shikino. Let's leave aside about how there are still ninja at the current year. Or rather, since Alica-san didn't bat an eye on my words, they seem to really exist, I mean, the shinobi.

"Seiren-sama, we've told you repeatedly, but be careful, okay?"

"I understand. Everyone too, I'm relying on you."

"Yes. I will also tell Minoa."

"Yup. Speaking of which, where did Minoa go to?"

"Ah-, she's currently taking out the laundry-."

"...Thanks for your hard work."

Obviously, it's necessary to do laundry. Just like summer, I only brought the minimum necessary luggage here.

Really, I've been greatly indebted to everyone.

At the same time as Minoa-san returned, the morning preparation was also completed, so we headed towards the dining room to have a breakfast. Fubuki-san also came here today, and she led us the way.

In front of the dining room, we met with Taiga-san who came along with Saya-san. Ah, thank goodness. We can have our breakfast together.

"Good morning, Taiga-san."

"Good morning, Seiren-sama. You look adorable this morning as well."

"Please don't say such things so early in the morning. Good grief."

Eei, what the heck is this person saying so early in the morning like this? Each and every time, he's like this.

'My goodness,' as I was thinking of it, I noticed that there were other footsteps.

"Ane-sama, Nii-sama, good morning. It isn't too late for you to start professing your love to Ane-sama after you're married, right, Nii-sama?"

"Heee?!"

Ou, I'd definitely be surprised if you suddenly raised your voice from behind like that, Saryuu.

When I turned around in a fluster, there was my little brother with a sullen face along with his maids in their imposing stances. There were Maki-san and Kanna-san, and then one more person with a large build and fluffy hair in pigtails—Tokino-san. These three people are Saryuu's exclusive maids.

Here, I have Minoa-san, Alica-san, and Oriza-san, so I wonder if it's decided to have three maids with a large, medium, and small build each?

"Ah, m-morning, Saryuu."

"Morning, Saryuu. What are you saying? It isn't too early to start from now on, right?"

"It's embarrassing for me to even look at it. To put things bluntly, please don't flirt around in public, if you're a good adult!"

Aah-. Well, that's right, no matter even if he's your relative, it's quite embarrassing to look at people flirting around in public. No, well, I'm also embarrassed, though.

But Taiga-san seems to not understand that, as he answered Saryuu with a composed expression.

"I see. Saryuu, are you jealous?"

"W-who?! The one who's said to have no luck with women until he met Ane-sama is you, Nii-sama!"

Oi, you two, what kind of conversation are you having? Just when did you leave me out of the conversation? But, oh well, whatever.

Now then, what should I do? I sought rescue from Fubiki-san... wait, she's not there. She is not Ayato-san and Maito-san, but she can also erase her presence, huh?

When I turned my sight to Saya-san in my trouble, she greatly nodded before stepping forward with a thud.

"Taiga-sama, Saryuu-sama. Seiren-sama is astonished here. In addition, please save your siblings conversation for after the meal."

"S-sorry..."

"I'm sorry."



In response to Saya-san's words—though she didn't yell at them, the two brothers turned timid. Seeing Taiga-san looking like this, it seems that he has been indebted to Saya-san for various reasons, too.

Saya-san heaved a sigh as she looked at my direction and said.

"...It's my first time seeing Taiga-sama praising a woman so boldly like that."

Yes?

So, he hadn't praised someone else other than me from the very beginning?

Whoa, this is so unexpected! Seriously?

"Eh, wasn't he originally like that?"

"It seemed that there weren't really any women that he was interested in."

"Is that so..."

...Well, that's quite obvious, since he's still unmarried at this age. I guess he wasn't interested in any woman even when he frequently went around the town, let alone to think of picking up a woman on the street. He should have had several matchmaking, though.

And then, the one who won Taiga-san's favor turned out to be me, was it? I don't really understand whether he has good eyes to see women or not.

"Saya... what do you think of me?"

"You're unmistakably someone who would be the Shikino family's successor."

"Ah, yeah..."

Saya-san expressionlessly answered Taiga-san's question as he asked it with a troubled face. Ah-, not good, Taiga-san can't absolutely win against Saya-san. No well, that's good that there are people like that by his side. After all, they can become someone who'd be able to stop him if he were to behave recklessly.

## Chapter 71: Greetings, At the Autumn Harvest Festival

The first breakfast that I had at the Shikino mansion was—it might be quite unusual here, but it was rice. The brown rice congee used a fish dashi, and it was delicious and nutritious, so I had no problem with it.

Besides the brown rice congee, there were baked seafood fillets, vegetable salad, and scrambled eggs. The soup is a consomme, and since it's autumn, it's full of potatoes and other root crops. The menu seems like it can fill your stomach up. Also, it feels like the meal at Shikino's is more Japanese-styled than the Shiya's. Though we still use fork, knife, and spoon here.

At the end of the meal, the tea appeared. Perhaps they knew of what tea I liked, so the tea that appeared was the same as the tea that was often made at the Shiiya mansion.

Whoa—as I took a breath, Taiga-san suddenly asked me.

“Speaking of which, what about the person who was staying at the Shiiya mansion?”

“Eh? Ah, Leo-san?”

“Yes. Because it was written in Seiren-sama's letter, I was a little worried.”

I see, I see, I wrote about him in the letter, indeed. After that... well, as far as it goes, it seems that he has withdrawn himself from me.

Shall I at least tell him about how Leo-san said that he wanted to come and see the harvest festival here?

“When Saryuu and I went out of the mansion, he sent me off along with my parents. And vaguely, it seems that he wants to come and see the festival that will be held here.”

“He also said something like how he'd feel bad if he were to disturb Neesama and Nii-sama.”

“Is that so...”

At my answer and Saryuu's, Taiga-san's face twisted into a sour expression. Eh, could it be that...?

“Taiga-san, do you know Leo-san? The people at my house seem to have known him, but they wouldn’t tell me anything.”

“Ah, no. I also don’t know anything about him. Yeah.”

...Is that so? For a moment, his eyes flickered.

But well, I suppose that if Taiga-san also hides it, it means that it is something that can’t be helped even if I were to know about it, or it’s just that Leo-san is someone that he doesn’t really want to tell me anything about, or things like that, right?

There might still be various complicated things to consider. Ah-, so troublesome.

When the tea time was almost over, I left my seat. Since I have to go to the harvest festival’s venue immediately after this, I have to change my clothes before that.

Taiga-san seems to be doing that as well, and he’s wearing outfit that seemed cool. Or it can be said that he’s wearing rich clothes. The outfit is similar to what Taiga-san wore before, but he’s now wearing a robe with a slightly simpler color and hemmed pants.

At the entrance, Saya-san has been waiting while holding burgundy—or dark red mantles. Eh, it seems that it has to be worn from the top.

“I apologize for my sudden request in relation to the harvest festival. I’m glad that you understood.”

“Ah, no problem. I have roughly heard the situation from Fubuki-san.”

“Yeah. Fubuki-san might look like this, but she is quite handy, so I chose her as she was the most suitable to be Seiren-sama’s bodyguard.”

“I’ve also said that everyone in our place also seemed to be quite strong.”

The conversation that I had with Taiga-san while wearing the mantle was about Fubuki-san. Ah-, as expected, she’s strong, and just like that, I’m well convinced. Hearing my opinion of the maids, Taiga-san also laughed happily while saying, “I thought you’d say that!”

“By the way, is this kind of outfit alright? Since it’s a harvest festival, I was thinking about wearing outfit that wasn’t too gaudy...”

After Taiga-san finished wearing his mantle, I decided to ask him for now. It

seems that there won't be any other words to come out other than praising words, but that's Taiga-san's fault.

Perhaps taking into consideration that it's autumn, the maids chose a beige dress. I also wore an olive green stole at my shoulders, and it feels relatively plain. Nah, whenever some clothes with gaudy color was taken out, no matter what, I came to remember Leo-san. No matter how you put it, it doesn't seem quite good to be worn at the harvest festival.

"It suits you really well, Seiren-sama. It's perfect for your personality."

"...Taiga-san, why do you always praise it whenever your opponent is me? It's embarrassing."

"But I'm only voicing out my true feelings?"

Ah-, as expected, even though I was prepared for it, my face still turned red until my ears. I mean, I'd like it if he can properly point the bad things to me instead.

However, before I could point it out, Saryuu suddenly hopped into the conversation and opened his mouth to talk as if he was exasperated, and his voice came from the other direction. Ah-sorry, he's still your biological brother, after all. ...In the future, don't become like this, okay?

"Nii-sama is just that deeply in love with Neesama. Good grief, even though we've told you that it's embarrassing."

"Mu... Saryuu, is that so?"

"That's right. Perhaps the fact that you can't understand that is the reason why you've been single up until now."

"Eh? Seiren-sama, did I go too far? I'm telling you... Eh-."

Taiga-san tilted his head from hearing that. My maids, Saryuu's maids, and even Saya-san simultaneously heaved a sigh, oi. Why is he only saying, "eh-?", really.

However, as expected, it's not the territory of Shiiya. Therefore, I'm shifting the guilt to the Shikino. Being the main culprit on how he managed to grow up like this, the Shikino have to take their responsibilities.

"Please hear Saya-san's lecturing, then. Perhaps that's the most effective way, I think."

"Gu. F-from Saya, is it...?"

“Please leave it to me, Seiren-sama. I’ll be giving Taiga-sama a kind, careful, and thorough explanation.”

“I’ll be relying on you, then.”

Oh-, she possessed an intensity that wasn’t inferior to Kaya-san when she is being serious like this. Go and lecture Taiga-san severely, okay?

It seems like the saying about “love is blind” is true, huh.

I also need to be careful, though.

The harvest festival’s main venue is a public square that’s located slightly distant from the Shikino mansion. There’s a water fountain in the middle of it, and I can see a clock tower in the area slightly further than there.

There’s a stage that turns its back to the clock tower installed just in front of the water fountain. It seems that the head of the Shikino family has been giving their speeches there every year. But for this year, for some reason, I’m also supposed to appear there.

Since it’s clear that we are the head of the Shikino family and his fiancée, the Shiiya family’s daughter, the maids are wearing clothes that are also standing out, which is their usual maid uniform minus the apron. Saya-san is wearing green uniform, while Alica-san and the others are wearing their blue dresses. As expected, since the outfits would look plain just like that, they’re wearing ribbon or scarf at their collar. It’s quite cute.

Taiga-san and I are riding on Genjirou. Meanwhile, Saryuu and the maids are walking beside us, and obviously, we stand out conspicuously. Both sides of the road until the public square have been densely packed with the fief population who have gathered, and it feels like they’re lining up just like the audience of a marathon or something like that.

“Young Master-!”

“Hi, Young Master!”

“Congratulations on your inauguration as the new head of the family-.”

Though it’s not a kabuki show or something like that where people would usually shout enthusiastically, there are lots of voices from here and there. And each time, Taiga-san answered by waving his hand as he looked at his surroundings.

“You’re so popular, Taiga-san.”

“Well, I’ve been wandering around the town quite often.”

Taiga-san smiled in a good mood as he embraced my shoulders. Yup, well, since Genjirou is also walking slowly, I won’t fall down anyway, but it makes me feel relieved.

Even so, for you to get this popular just by wandering around the town, are you some Hachidaime? Nah, since your identity is known, then you’re different from them, huh.

Well, it would be better for a feudal lord to get popular rather than not getting known at all.

And just like that, we arrived at the public square. I went down from Genjirou and looked up at the clock tower. The size doesn’t differ that much from the clock tower that’s in the Shiiya, and as expected, there’s a bell hanging at the top of it.

...Eh, there’s a person there.

“Taiga-san, is it usual for someone to be there near the bell?”

“Eh? No, people would only come there when it’s time to ring the bell...”

“I saw a person just now.”

“...Understood. Please just pretend that you haven’t noticed.”

The moment I mentioned that I saw a person, I feel like Taiga-san’s face turned scary. ...Have I seen something that I can’t see?

After lightly tapping my back that was quivering, Taiga-san went up to the stage together with me. Ah, when we stand here like this, the clock tower will be at our back. Yosh, don’t see, I shouldn’t see, I’ll just leave that matter to someone else to handle.

“As we all know, my father retired last summer. Then, as his successor, this Shikino Taiga has been appointed to become the next head of the Shikino family. Please give me your best regards.”

Meanwhile, Taiga-san began to calmly deliver his greeting in front of many fief population. But isn’t this a greeting for his inauguration as the head of a family rather than a greeting for the harvest festival? But well, that’s fine.

“I think that everyone here has known me quite well, and as you know, I’m still a greenhorn. If you see something weird, please do not hesitate to tell me.

It will surely be useful for the sake of everyone in this fief. I want you to think that this festival is also held for the sake of everyone as well.”

...Unexpectedly, perhaps Taiga-san was under the stage, alongside with the other people until last year. And then, just like that, he might have listened to various talks from the people who gathered, and so he was able to stand on the stage like this.

As I was thinking about it, Taiga-san lightly pushed my back. I reflexively stepped forward about 2-3 steps, and so I’m standing at a spot just a little bit to the front from Taiga-san. Then.

“And then, I think that rumors have spread, but I’d like to formally introduce her in this place. She is a rare woman who is putting her expectation to me. She is the daughter of the Shiiya family, Seiren-sama.”

“Young Master! You mustn’t trick such a young girl like this!”

“Sorry! I wasn’t such a good person!”

My introduction was fine, but Taiga-san, would it be okay for you to answer someone else’s teasing in such a manner? The surroundings got excited and bursted out in laughter, oh well, guess they accepted it just fine.

Or perhaps I should say, I wonder if that kind of conversational exchange here is fine? I’m still a brat, indeed. And my age is quite distant from Taiga-san.

Also, don’t speak so fondly of me in public like that. It was already embarrassing enough within the mansion, and now we have so many fief population watching after us.

“Now then, Seiren-sama.”

“Ah, yes. ...I’m Shiiya Seiren. It’s a pleasure to meet everyone.”

That’s right, I’ve come here to greet everyone. For the time being, let’s try reading the sentences that I’ve thought together with the maids yesterday. Nah, the whole passage is inside my head, though.

“Because of my frail body, I haven’t gotten much opportunity to go out in public. Right now, I’m still in the middle of studying how to properly associate with people. However, Taiga-san told me that it was fine.”

More or less, that was how it looked like in public, that’s why I said so. However, in reality...

Though I was raised as a man, Taiga-san told me that it was fine.

Though I was raised in the other world without knowing anything of this world, Taiga-san told me that it was fine.

That's why, I'm coming to this person's side.

"I will be living with my parents for a little while, and if things turn out well, I think that I will come here again next year. Please treat me well at that time!"

When I finished my sentence and bowed my head, I received a lot of applause along with voices saying, "Well said, Princess!" The way to use applause in this world is quite the same to the other world, so I feel relieved. Yup.

When I came down from the stage, there was a shadow that approached quickly. Eh, isn't that Fubuki-san? Since she isn't wearing her maid uniform, I couldn't recognize her for a moment there.

Fubuki-san who assumed an ordinary village woman's appearance knelt down in front of Taiga-san.

"A stray magician had aimed at the clock tower, so I've seized and took them away."

"Understood. Proceed with the interrogation."

"Yes!"

After lowering her head deeply, Fubuki-san stood up and left the spot. I admired the scene that happened before me for an instant. Well, the lord over here is Taiga-san, after all.

Or rather, the clock tower?

I turned around to face the back of the stage in a hurry, at the structure that stood towering over the surroundings. Under the tower's feet, there were several garrisons gathered over there, they seemed to be doing an investigation or something like that.

Uhm, in short we seemed to be at the receiving ends of a long distance firing similar to a bow sniper, or rather, that kind of a magic spell? The figure of a person that I saw earlier was the magician, huh.

Or rather, the stray magician, huh.

"Stray?"

"It's a derogatory term for magicians that have no master... that being said, it can also be used to address magicians who perform any dirty jobs without



batting an eye for the sake of money.”

“Haaa...”

I see.

Nah well, I understand that he couldn't have been hired by the likes of the feudal lords just like Jigen-san, though. Aah, but well, such kind of magicians exist, huh. The kind of people who'd do anything for the sake of money.

“Thanks to Seiren-sama's discovery, we managed to deal with it before anything happens. You have my gratitude.”

“Ah, no. Me too, thanks for protecting us.”

Ah really, when he pushed me out earlier, surely it was done so he could protect me from what's behind, right, Taiga-san?”

## Chapter 72: The Riotous Autumn Harvest Festival

“Princess-. Is it delicious?”

“Yes, it’s delicious. The thick tare sauce gives such a rich taste.”

After we finished our greetings, I visited several shops along with Taiga-san and the maids. The one I’m eating right now is—to put it simply, a mitarashi dango. The taste doesn’t differ much from the other world, so I feel relieved. Ah-, I want to drink a green tea.

The matter regarding the stray magician, it was decided that the report made from interrogating the offender and other notable things would be delivered to the Shikino mansion later on. It might be better to immediately return to the mansion, but we’ve come all the way here, after all. Besides, the magician was already arrested.

And well, the maids are there as my bodyguards. I’m also with Taiga-san and Saryuu.

“Seiren-sama, again, please don’t go away from our side.”

“I understand, Taiga-san. By the way, Saryuu, there’s some tare sauce on your cheek.”

“Eh? Wa, Tokino, handkerchief.”

“Yes, Saryuu-sama. If you’re like this, you will always be considered as a child no matter how much time passes.”

I wonder what’s with this heartwarming sensation? No, it’s better like this rather than being savage.

I wonder how the others around us view this... It’s fine if they view us as just the elder brother, the elder sister, and the younger brother.

“It seems like the young master and the princess are the married couple, and the little master Saryuu is their child.”

“Eh?!”

Apparently, the opinion of the dango store auntie who brought us some tea seemed to represent the others’ opinions in general. Regardless of Taiga-san’s age, Saryuu and me were only 4 years apart.

Incidentally, it has been decided that the people of the Shikino territory would be calling me as “princess”? I’m a daughter from a good house, but it’s not that I’m of the royal family, though. It seems that I have the right to inherit the throne, but it isn’t a position that will just come by itself during my life.

*Ding*, the clock tower’s bell rang. Taiga-san who raised his face in a hurry then told us while scratching his hair apologetically.

“...I’m sorry, Seiren-sama. After this, I will have a meeting with the merchants at night.”

“Whoa. You seem to be very busy, although it’s the harvest festival’s time...”

“Well, this is also my endeavor as a feudal lord. Besides, being busy during the harvesting season means that the crops turn out to be either an abundant harvest, or bad harvest. Luckily, it’s an abundant harvest this year. That’s why, this hectic schedule is a joyous one.”

I see. In that case, Taiga-san and the other feudal lords must have been working very hard, huh? If that’s the case, I also have to send him off with a smile.

“If that’s the case, then please do your best and take care.”

“Yes. Then, I’m off.”

“See you later, Nii-sama.”

“Taiga-sama, take care-.”

After we dee-eePLY bowed our heads, Taiga-san immediately rushed off. Saya-san who also rushed off after him might be in charge of helping him around with the meeting’s preparations.

The fief population turned towards their young feudal lord who pushed his way through and there were voices here and there, saying, “Young master, you can’t make the princess lonely-,” or “Please do your best in your job-!” Really, Taiga-san is really liked over here.

“Neesama, shouldn’t we also return quickly? There’s another concern we have to think about besides the greeting.”

“Eh? Aah, yup.”

When Saryuu told me that, I remembered and thought, “That’s right.” It’s all fine up until now since Taiga-san was here, but after this... It’s already bad

enough with us being targeted, but we couldn't afford to involve the fief population in such circumstances.

"That's right. I feel bad for everyone, but shall we go back?"

I said that and everyone stood up. Well, since the whole group stood up like this, we're perfectly standing out right now. In addition, the auntie who quickly noticed it turned up and asked, "Are you going to return?"

"I'm sorry. We will be excusing ourselves for today."

"No problem, thank you very much. Princess, when are you coming here again next time?"

"Uhm... I still have one week here, right? If that's the case, then I'd like to visit again during that time."

"We will definitely be looking forward to your visit!"

Yup, I'd really like to visit again if possible.

While thinking about it, we paid the bill and left the food stand.

The carriages that we took when we went here was parked at the area that seemed to be an exclusive parking lot. When we got there, the horses were still linked to the carriages and remained quiet, but the coachman was waiting for us nervously.

"What's wrong?"

"Eh, ah, uhm, I-I'm sorry!"

With a face that seemed about to cry, the coachman took refuge in the carriage. 'What's up with him?' but soon after I thought of that, there were an army of assailants that could easily be seen, surrounding our circumference. Ah-, they were lying there in wait to ambush us, huh? Damn it.

When I tried to think about where they appeared from, there was big wagon parked nearby. In addition, I thought that the security was guarding this place tightly, but it seemed that there were several security officers being mixed within the army of assailants. So they have such kind of accomplices? It's really no joke.

"Princess, let's not return home and play with us!"

"W-w-what kind of a woman would get attracted to the lot of you who tried to pick them up like this?"

“Nobody is trying to pick up a woman here, though?”

The security officer who answered Alica-san in an exasperated voice had his eyes glaring at us—most likely, he’s a fake security officer. Ah-could this probably be...?

To describe it, this might be located in the middle of the town and people should have come here often. These assailants are bringing various things such as hoes and blunt swords, and that includes the fake security officer who’s bringing a baton, perhaps they are bringing such things as a measurement so that they won’t get intervened by the other people nearby? In actuality, the fief population felt afraid seeing them like that and there were practically nobody who dared to approach this location.

Well, for the time being, it seems that we’ve avoided involving Taiga-san and the fief population in this situation.

When I thought of that, Saryuu then quietly spoke to me. Oi, where did you take that wooden stick that you’re grasping right now?

“Ane-sama.”

“It seems that the time for us to use force without having to think of the consequences has come.”

“It seems so. But really, what are you thinking?”

Saryuu’s breathing roughly in his excitement, but I can tell that his knees are trembling. Nah, to be honest, I also don’t know since when have I lost the power in my legs due to the fear?

However, the others seemed to act in contrast to us.

“Then, there’s no need for us to restrain ourselves, right?”

“It seems to be the case!”

While looking at the swords and spears that the assailants had, Oriza-san and Kanna-san raised their voices in high spirits. They seemed to be full of smiles, but for some reason, the air that their backs emitted seemed scary.

“Seiren-sama, stay behind me. Saryuu-sama, please take care of Seiren-sama.”

“Though I think that Saryuu-sama will be enjoying the spectacle after this.”

Alica-san took out a long rod from under the carriage that stopped as it was,

and handed it over to Maki-san. She then picked out another rod to hold by herself.

“This seems to be more enjoyable than having a goat as your opponent.”  
“You still haven’t settled the match with that goat, Minoa?”

Minoa-san snorted while seemingly cracking her knuckles. Next to her, Tokino-san lightly loosened her waist as if she was astonished at Minoa-san’s words.

Or rather, Minoa-san, it seemed pretty dull for you to have Gonzou as your opponent, didn’t it? Though you seemed to be enjoying yourself quite well at that time.

“Ou, ou, these girls seemed to be in high spirits!”

One of the assailants who was near us approached Kanna-san unsteadily. At that moment.

“Humph!”

“Gwo?!”

The knee that was raised straightly from beneath managed to land a direct hit at the hooligan’s lower jaw. Since there was the sound of the impact striking against his teeth, it seemed that the hit also damaged the top of his head, and then he fell down with just that one hit.

“Please don’t come near mee-! Eiiyaah-!”

Oriza-san pushed out her palms to the front. The next moment, her hands shone and as I heard the sound of her palms hitting, three men were sent flying. Or rather, so people here also said, “Eiyah!” like that, huh? Ah, well, let’s not pay attention to it first.

“Alica, let’s compete on who can defeat the most opponents!”

“Then, it’s going to be my victory again!”

Maki-san and Alica-san seemed to exchange conversations as if they couldn’t read the situation and ran apart from Saryuu. The long rods that they greatly pushed off managed to sink into the men’s abdomen areas precisely. Well, the hits occasionally missed and shifted to hit the area under their abdomens, but... let’s not see that. It’s inevitable that it looks quite painful.

“Compared to Gonzou, they don’t have that much power, huh.”

“Perhaps it’s because they don’t have any horn?”

Minoa-san and Tokino-san managed to smoothly evade the attacks from the swords and the hoes that were just in front of them and wrested their opponents’ hands. They were lifted up and then thrown onto the ground, piling up there one after another, and they seemed like a kagami mochi this way. The two of them who occasionally hit their mutual opponent from both sides at the same time seemed like they were playing around.

While I was thinking about it, several people nimbly slipped through successfully and suddenly appeared in front of us.

“Whoa, don’t come!”

One man got a direct hit from Saryuu’s improvised wooden stick just now. Meanwhile, the other person ran towards me. When I dodged him in a panic, he hurled himself at the carriage and injured himself. Ah, to be more precisely, just an inch more and he’d ram himself there.

And at that time, a reinforcement arrived.

“I will help you out.”

The person who quickly stepped in while saying that... ah, it was Fubuki-san who was still in her village girl style.

She forcibly took the spear away from the man who fell over and threw her hand at the back of his neck, then she nonchalantly threw the spear at the direction of the carriage that the group of assailants used. As if she was aiming for a certain point, or rather, perhaps she had aimed at it—it managed to cut down the rope that was tied to the horse.

“Yes, the way to your home is right over there.”

*Clap!*, a sound could be heard. It was the sound of Minoa-san spanking the horse’s buttocks with all of her power. “Neiiiigh!” the horse cried out the similar sound that the other world’s horses also cry out, and then it raised its crow face and quickly rushed off. Eh, just when did the horse get separated from the carriage?

...Well, that’s fine. In other words, this is a threat saying that you lot could no longer escape, right?

.....In the middle of the many happenings around us, almost all of the weapons have been taken away from the hooligan army and they were thoroughly being beaten down. At the vacant area of the parking lot, approximately 10 or more people have collapsed.

The maids who went on a rampage are taking a rest, but there are several people who haven't felt satisfied yet, gathering at this spot.

In other words, they were the people of the fief that were hindered by these assailants at this harvest festival.

"It's said that quarrel is a festival's flower, but what are you planning with bringing over these weapons?!"

The auntie from the dango store brought a bamboo broom and spanked the assailants who have collapsed without any mercy. Whoa, it looks so painful. The young lady from the flower store brought out the string that was used to make flower bouquet and tied the assailants. W-wow, she's so skillful. E-eh? The hunter didn't bring any weapon here, but he raised up his fist. His bearded face also smiled, and he looks scary.

"Princeeeess... it hurts, please heelp!"

The fake security officer who somehow managed to escape from that situation was crawling towards my feet. Aaaaah, how pitiful... no way, who would even pity you, stupid?

"Seiren-sama."

"I'm requesting you to not harm them gravely. Perhaps you can turn him over now?"

Perhaps because she participated midway, Fubuki-san spoke to me calmly and I requested that from her. Once I did so, she said, "...yes," and her lips curved up to form a wicked smile in a sense. I see, I see, so Fubuki-san also understood what I intended to do? That's right, yup.

The fake security officer who was turned over and is facing up right now. He nearly doesn't move at all now. Oh well, regardless of the dango shopkeeper and the flower shopkeeper, the hunter who came here and the other farmers were ready to beat him up, after all.

"Princeeeess... it hurtsss!"



“Is that so? It hurts, right? ...You reap what you sow now!”

While smiling sweetly, I stomped on him with all my mind. Ah, I trampled on a hard lump. Eh-, yup, as expected, it was a man’s groin, in other words, his vitals. Die out, all of your genes!

But this kind of sensation really feels bad, huh. But I’d be more disgusted if it is excessively hard, though.

“Gagaga?!”

Well-, I understand a little bit of that pain. However, you’re really reaping what you sow, okay?

“You aren’t holding anything back, huh, Seiren-sama?”

“No-, I’m holding myself back, though things may appear this way. I mean, they were aiming for our lives here.”

“Well, that seems to be the case.”

Alica-san nodded as if she was convinced at my answer and continued to tightly tying up the security guard cosplayer.

Around that time, it seems that all of the fief population who gathered here have finished venting their anger for the time being. The dango store auntie was worn-out and carelessly dropped her bamboo broom, then she noticed me.

“Princess, are you alright?!”

“Ah, yes, as you can see, I’m fine. Did you call one of the garrison or someone else?”

“Yes, just now.”

The auntie nodded and faced towards the direction where there were several garrisons who ran here, all of them are wearing the same outfits as the security guard cosplayer earlier.

While the subordinates were taking the assailants away, the one who had a decorated uniform—perhaps the commanding officer—stood in front of me and saluted. Aah, the salutation that the people of this world do, it’s the same pose as the other world’s. He pulled out his hat—or perhaps I should say—his helmet.

“Princess Shiiya! Excuse us for such a terrible discourtesy!”

“Aah no, it’s okay. The way they go public with their attacks and how we can

deal with them directly afterward is better than having them done it stealthily behind our backs, right?”

“Yes, well, that’s right, indeed.”

Yes, yes. It will be more troublesome to bring them to surface if they did it stealthily. After all, this was the result of how Touka-san seemed to have retired peacefully, when the truth behind it wasn’t like that.

“Then, I’ll leave it up to you to deal with them. Thank you for your hard work.”

“Yes! Then, excuse us. Uhm, how should we inquire the state of affairs from you...?”

“If Taiga-san allows it, then can I have it done at the Shikino mansion?”

“Yes, I understand. We will be contacting the head of the Shikino family. For the time being, please prioritize your safety first.”

Yes. That’s why we wanted to go home earlier. But why did things still turn this way?

The commanding officer and the garrisons saluted us sternly once again and dragged along the assailants with them.

Good grief! I took a deep breath and turned around. There, Fubuki-san who wasn’t wearing her maid uniform stood still. Perhaps she was guarding me against my surroundings.

“Ah. Fubuki-san, thank you for coming. We were saved.”

“No. I simply carried out the duty that was ordered by Taiga-sama.”

Fubuki-san showed a slightly troubled expression, but she still happily smiled.

## Chapter 73: Good Job, Information Gathering while Having A Tea

On that day's night, after having a dinner at the mansion whose master was away from home, one of the garrison guards came to conduct a police interview. I think that perhaps he purposely avoided coming here and disturb us at dinner time. Also, Taiga-san returned home along with him.

Then, it was arranged that we would be conversing in the reception room that was located next to the east side of the entrance hall. But well, it's pretty much the same principle when we're going to converse with the other guests.

With the order of the maids going first and then Saryuu and I going later, we were inquired of some very detailed matters. Though Saryuu and I mostly only watched the scene, there were still lots of things they inquired of us, such as the condition of the person who pretended to be a security officer and about the coachman who took refuge in the carriage.

When Taiga-san and Saryuu were being considerate and offered some tea, the guard refused because they were doing their professional duties. I thought that he was honestly admirable because he went that strict on doing his duties. Really, he did such a good job.

After hearing our stories one by one, the guard concluded his investigation and stood up to bow his head deeply. Since he had taken off his hat within the room, he didn't do the usual salutation.

"Thank you very much. I'm sorry for troubling you and taking your time."

"No. We also would like to thank you for troubling yourself to come to this place. We hope that the situation could be settled quickly, for the sake of the fief population, as well."

"Yes, we will put forth every effort to work on our professional duties."

More or less, I was like the main target here, so I became the representative and returned his greeting. Really, do your best, the guard who answered me stiffly. Putting aside about me, well, it also seemed dreadful for the fief population in the Shikino territory.

“I’ll be relying on you. Please send him off.”

“Yes, Seiren-sama.”

At my request, Saya-san nodded. She had been waiting for me as Taiga-san had told her before that he wanted her to follow me. And then the guard left the mansion. I only heard a little bit of the sound that the small carriage made as it rattled on the street.

Nah, actually I wanted to send him off until the entranceway as well, but Taiga-san told me to stay here. He said that it was his own duty as the master in this house to send the guard off at the entrance hall.

After a while, Taiga-san entered the reception room. Didn’t he say that he had some kind of a meeting tonight?

“It was terrible, wasn’t it, Seiren-sama? Saryuu was also tired, right?”

“Nii-sama, too. You must be very surprised when you suddenly heard of the incident, right?”

“I’m fine. More importantly, Taiga-san, did the meeting go well?”

“It was around the time when the news arrived to me about Seiren-sama being in danger, right? Fortunately, the other party nodded and said that it was fine to adjourn the meeting until tomorrow.”

...Speaking of which, the garrison guards seemed to have come to see Taiga-san and sought a permission from him to come to the mansion in order to conduct a police interview with us, right? And Taiga-san who heard that we were assaulted quickly returned from his destination right after arriving there. The other party was really a good person for pardoning this.

“You’re regarded highly just because you’re the daughter of the Shiiya family. I think that Seiren-sama might not be getting the actual feeling of it, though.”

Taiga-san suddenly said that. I wonder if the daughters of feudal lords are really that important?

But the thing that he continued to tell me wasn’t about it anymore.

“The Shiiya territory was successful at cultivating pepper for over several years. Pepper is one of the essential spices, so there are a lot of neighboring feudal lords who would like to get their hands on the Shiiya territory’s know-how. In addition, there are lots of farmers at the Shikino and we have a good

compatibility with pepper. Seeing those facts, it's natural for both sides to have a strong mutual business relationship."

Pepper huh-? Come to think of it, it was said that recently, we began cultivating the pepper at our own territory too, huh?

Well, I somehow can understand. The cold storage technology has been developed in the world where I was raised in, so the quality of meat doesn't really decrease when it has been stored for quite a long time. But here, it seems to be very hard with how the meat will begin to smell as soon as we store the meat carelessly.

It seems that pepper is really important in order to make the meat last longer and still taste delicious when it is eaten. I only said that "it seems" to be like that because I hadn't learned about it in practice.

"Outwardly, there are people who believe that my engagement with you is equal to a political marriage of convenience related to that fact. That our engagement will result in the two houses getting more powerful."

"Whoa, is that so?"

"Well, certainly, thanks to the Shiiya's pepper, the Shikino's meat has become able to produce an excellent taste, though."

Yes, tasty food is important. However, Taiga-san shrugged his shoulders as if he was troubled because he also understood that his meeting with me wasn't intended for that purpose at all, I think.

"Even if I told them that our meeting was purely something that wasn't related to that matter at all, they might find it unbelievable, since they're looking at the matter from outside."

"Right?"

"When they look at Nii-sama and Neesama practically, nobody would be able to tell that kind of a nonsense anymore. So, it's alright."

What do you mean by 'it's alright', Saryuu?

Well, it's not like we would be willing to say that it was a "meeting that happened because his own father looked like the stalker of his partner's own mother". Yup, it's a secret that we will bring to the grave. I wonder if people of this world would phrase it to be "bringing it to the God of Sun's place"?

After we have calmed down, we drank the tea together. Oh-, this one feels so much like a green tea. The tea cakes that appeared are dango, and they are very delicious and refreshing. Or perhaps I should say, so even here, they also match dango to be eaten together with green tea, huh-? So happy-. Around the time I felt relieved, Saya-san went in whole carrying a big envelope. Then, she walked up to Taiga-san and handed over the envelope.

“Taiga-sama, Seiren-sama. Here is the duplicate of the criminal investigation report.”

“Thanks, Saya.”

He received it and took out the investigation report from within the envelope. Taiga-san flipped through the paper sheets and looked at the report before he presented the papers to my direction while saying, “Here you go.” Together with Saryuu, we scanned the content of the report. Although one might say that Taiga-san told us the full details of it.

“It’s so disappointing, but the security officer was a genuine officer. It seemed that my father counted on him and entered him among the garrisons.”

By his father, it means Touka-san. Which means, that security officer was someone who was close to Touka-san.

“Meanwhile, the others... several people were the group of people who became unemployed after the summer, and the others seemed to be hired for the money, but it seems that they haven’t confessed the source of that money yet.”

Saya-san then talked about the continuation without any hesitation. Haa, so they gathered a number of people using money as the reward. The group of people who got unemployed after the summer, in other words, they were the employees who became unemployed because of Taiga-san’s restructuring, as they were siding with Touka-san, huh. They then targeted me who was Taiga-san’s fiancée, as Taiga-san was the one who caused their group’s unemployment... Nn-, it seemed like they took offense and planned to poke at our weak point. The maids are strong, but I’m weak, after all.

“So, it seems like the security officer and his allies became excessively desperate in their assaults. After all, if they revealed the facts of the matter to

public, their own positions would be bad and it won't be good for them."

Kanna-san who prepared our tea inflated her cheeks. Well, I think that it's way better than hiding the crimes inside.

Oriza-san who arranged the dango together shrugged her shoulders a bit and said, "And after that..."

"The stray magician that was on the clock tower seemed to refuse talking at all. If he keeps being silent, it seems that a magician specializing in investigations would also participate in questioning him-."

Ah-, they're trying to open his mouth with magic, right? Such kind of thing... actually exists, huh? There doesn't seem to be any lie detector in this world. But still, the one who's keeping silent is also a magician, isn't he?

"Wouldn't it be hard because they are fellow magicians? It's likely that there will be something like a resistance."

"Ah, Seiren-sama knows about it really well, eh-?"

"...As I thought-. I mean, isn't it obvious that one has to be careful when using their own magic towards an opponent or a target that is able to use magic as well?"

It's something like a common arrangement, or something like that. The magician that I know is only about Jigen-san, but that gramps possesses an absolutely powerful defense magic. Nah, I have never seen it in actuality, though.

"It is certainly true. In the first place, the so-called magic barrier was also created in order for the magician to prepare for their opponent's attack."

Taiga-san told me about it and everyone including me nodded in comprehension, "I see-." Wait, even Oriza-san nodded? Aren't you the one who's most well-informed with magic among all of us here?

"Taiga-sama."

After the tea party ended, another maid who wasn't Saya-san rushed in. She is probably still very young, and she looks adorable with how she seems to not getting used to wearing the maid uniform. Her hand grasped a white envelope.

"What's wrong?"

“It’s an urgent letter. It has a crown seal.”

“I understand.”

As he took the presented envelope, Taiga-san’s expression changed. Nevertheless, Taiga-san stood up without showing his flustered condition and turned to face me and Saryuu.

“I’m sorry, Seiren-sama. I will excuse myself tonight. Saryuu, you should also sleep earlier.”

“Ah, yes. Good night, Taiga-san.”

“Yes, I understand. Good night, Nii-sama.”

Taiga-san slightly nodded and went out of the room. As I sent off that back of his, I inclined my head at the words that I have never heard before.

“Crown seal?”

“To put it simply, it’s a letter sent out from the royal family. The wax that was used as a seal had the pattern of the crown, so that was how we called it.”

“Hee...”

I see, thanks, Saryuu. If that’s the case, of course Taiga-san ought to read it as soon as possible.

Speaking of which, it’s also fine for feudal lords to have their specific crests or something like that, but the Shikino and the Shiiya don’t have it, huh?

“In this country, the crests are only put up outside of the territory. It is something used to prove your identity, after all. Please think of the royal family’s crown as an exception.”

“Then, what about me?”

It seems that Saryuu knows a lot about this kind of thing, so I’m really saved that he told me all this.

Anyway, I am the daughter of the Shiiya family and this is the Shikino’s territory. In other words, wouldn’t I have to wear my family’s crest over here?”

“The Shikino and the Shiiya families are distantly related, and Neesama is Nii-sama’s fiancée, and these points alone are enough for identification. Also, almost all of the carriages don’t have any crest attached to them.”

“Because there are such things as being attacked en route, we don’t usually attach any crest to the carriages. The royal family is a special case, as they’re



using a very sturdy carriage.”

As Saya-san added her explanation, I came to understand it. I see, attaching a crest to a carriage would mean that the one riding this carriage is some big shots, and it seems to be saying that there are valuable things inside. The exceptions are rare and such cases happen when they have tight security. Saya-san smiled and then said, “Aah, Seiren-sama,” before she proceeded to tell me one more thing.

“When you’re holding your wedding ceremony, you will be coming here grandly by using a carriage with a crest attached on it.”

“...Whoa, I’d better be prepared for it.”

That’s right. I will soon become the bride of this house.  
...By the way, I wonder does this world have something like a wedding dress? It would be good if it doesn’t have to be dragged along, or if it doesn’t get torn or stuck in something that easily, but no, I shouldn’t be too concerned with that for the time being. Yup.

## Chapter 74: Oh Dear, the End of the Tea Party

After the tea party ended, there was someone who abruptly turned up in the reception room. It was Fubuki-san. Come to think of it, I haven't seen her ever since I returned to the mansion.

"I'm sorry for being late."

"Fubuki, where did you go?"

Saya-san, who remained even after Taiga-san left, raised her eyebrows. In front of her, Fubuki-san who had changed her clothes to her maid uniform bowed her head deeply.

"I have just tidied up the tea and tea cakes. Since they were of the brands that weren't usually used, it took me a little bit of time."

"It's unusual for you to do that. Nonetheless, your current duty is to protect Seiren-sama. Please be more careful in the future."

"Yes."

Saya-san's slightly strict way of talking is really similar to Kaya-san's. As expected of sisters, yup.

...Even so, is it that troublesome to prepare for the green tea? I wonder if the brewing method is different from the tea that I know?

Oh well, whatever. I will understand once I try to ask later on. More importantly, I have to quickly return to my room.

"Well then, since Fubuki-san has also returned, shall we go back to our room to take a rest?"

"That's right. Nii-sama also told me to go to bed earlier."

At my proposal, Saryuu also answered as if he felt relieved. ...As expected, if Taiga-san isn't here, I have to take up the main role, or else the others won't move, I guess. I have to be more careful, then.

"Then, I will guide you back."

"Please do. Everyone, good night."

After walking towards the door leading to the outside of the reception room

under the guidance of Fubuki-san and my maids, I turned around and bowed. I think that this gesture might be okay.

“Good night, Seiren-sama.”

“Nee-sama, good night.”

“Seiren-sama, good night-!”

When I looked at Saya-san and the others’ expressions, it seemed that my gesture before was fine. Ah-, I’m glad. I wonder if I should ask my mother about it once I go home. Or, Taiga-san. Whomever I choose, it’s impossible to ask them now.

During when we walked to the guest room, Fubuki-san brought up a subject as if she was worried about me.

“Today was such a terrible day, wasn’t it, Seiren-sama? Thank you for your hard work.”

“Well, yeah. However, I’m fine since Fubuki-san and the others are here.”

“It is our duty, after all.”

Her face which I saw at a glance was completely composed. Well, certainly it is her job right now to follow me, so it’s a matter of course.

When we arrived at the guest room, she turned to face my direction. From this door onwards, it’s probably the area where Alica-san and the others—my three maids will be taking the duty of protecting me. It’s also about time for Fubuki-san to take a rest.

“Then, I will be taking my leave. Have a good night, Seiren-sama.”

“Good night, Fubuki-san. See you tomorrow.”

“Yes. Please excuse me for today.”

After saying that and bowing her head, Fubuki-san went away. Whoa, I can’t hear her footsteps at all, awesome.

I entered the room and settled down on the sofa. Then, I raised a voice that is not ladylike at all.

Nah well, I mean, no matter what, I’m getting so tensed up because there are the maids here who are looking at me. For example, I have to properly use

“Watashi” instead of “Ore” as how I address myself here.

...I might be occasionally careless when I was together with Taiga-san. Ah-, this

is bad, I hope Saya-san ignored my carelessness, then everything is fine, though. As I was thinking of it, Oriza-san peered at me. As expected, since I have just finished the tea party, there's no need for me to drink something else again right now. Not to mention that my belly is getting flabby, too.

"You must have been tired-, Seiren-sama?"

"No, no, everyone else should be even more tired than I do, right?"

"If it's only like this, then it doesn't even count as a warming up."

Minoa-san calmly answered. I see, it doesn't even count as a warming up, huh? Then, I wonder if confronting Gonzou was counted as a proper warming up? Nah, I don't intend to ask about it, though.

...That's right. I have something that I want to ask, huh?

"...Hey-. That green tea, how do you usually brew it?"

"Yes?"

At my question, the three of them simultaneously turned towards me. It seemed that they managed to understand what I meant by "green", and Alica-san was the first one to answer.

"Ah, I have never brewed it before. What about Oriza and Minoa?"

"I have never brewed it, too-."

"Ah, I've learned it once. Because it is a variety that doesn't appear often on the market around the Shiiya territory, there hasn't been many chances to brew it."

"I see."

Because I thought that the three of them might know about it, so it was quite unexpected that only Minoa-san seems to have known about it. But well, certainly, I have never drunk a green tea at the Shiiya mansion. If that's the case, it can't be helped. There doesn't seem to be any other way to procure it other than receiving it as a souvenir.

"Though I must say that it shouldn't differ that much from how we usually brew tea. We just have to remember to be careful and pour the tea into the cup earlier than usual because the astringent will come out if we leave it for too long after pouring the hot water."

Ah, I see, I see. It will turn brown and the fragrance will change-.

When I was still at the institution, I drank the tea after the tea leaves had been

used up and became densely packed. There only remained a colored hot water at the end. Whoa, how nostalgic.

“I see. Then, it doesn’t seem to be much different from the brewing method that I know.”

“That kind of tea existed even in the world where Seiren-sama was raised in-?”

“Yup. Rather than that, it was the main tea in the country where I was raised in.”

“Hee, such kind of a place also exists, huh-?”

Right? Meanwhile, here, the tea that was called as “black tea” at the other world seems to be the main variety, and on the contrary, the green tea seems to be quite rare. That’s why, out of the three maids here, only Minoa-san knows the way to brew it.

It also doesn’t seem to be a major variety used in the Shikino territory. I was thinking of what Fubuki-san said earlier.

“...Anyway, why did Seiren-sama ask about it?”

Alica-san asked while preparing my pajamas. That’s right, they don’t understand why I asked such a thing out of a sudden. Yup, I have to explain.

“No, well, I heard that Fubuki-san took quite a bit of time when she tidied up the tea. I thought that there might be some kind of special tools being used here.”

“There is no such thing.”

Minoa-san negated my guess. If that’s the case, Fubuki-san’s excuse of tidying it up taking quite a bit of time—no matter how I look at it, it is weird. And it’s not like we use tea bags even for the black tea here.

“Since you can just reuse the same tools, it shouldn’t take that much of a time to tidy it up. The disposal of the used leaves shouldn’t also be that different.”

“Right? ...Yes, I can’t really understand.”

Which means, Fubuki-san was lying. However, I don’t understand why she lied to me like that.

If you were late because you had another errand to do, then you should honestly say so.

While I was thinking of it, Alica-san and Oriza-san stared at my face fixedly.

‘What is it?’ so I thought.

“Well, there was that incident today, so I think it’s better for us to just be more careful.”

“Right-? Seiren-sama, sometimes, you just got yourself in a tough predicament.”

“...I will be very careful. I’m sorry.”

Yes, sorry. As expected, it isn’t good for me who doesn’t have any power like everyone else to be going to dangerous places. Or rather, the thing about me getting myself in a tough predicament... was she referring to that incident in spring? She still held a grudge on it... oh well, it can’t be helped.

“Really, please be careful. Though we will also be strictly guarding you, we might not be able to do anything if the Contact Magic is used.”

Minoa-san heaved a big sigh and I could only hang my head.  
Hahaha, at the last moment, I felt very tired. Let’s just sleep for today, yup.

## Chapter 75: The Secret, Confidential Letter

“Eh?”

The next morning. Taiga-san, who ate his breakfast faster than us as usual, seemed to have gone to work.

After the slightly lonely breakfast that went on without the master of the house present was finally ended, I settled in my room. At that time, Fubuki-san entered while holding some documents. The documents seemed to be related to yesterday's incident.

“There was a call from the garrison station some time ago, saying that the magician had committed a suicide.”

Whoa, the one who had aimed from the clock tower? I hadn't expected that. Or rather, is it really a suicide, I wonder? The security officer who attacked us at the parking lot seemed to play a principal part in the plan, but...

...Well, it's not like the detailed information will just come to me by thinking about such things. I have no choice but to trust in the garrisons who walked those people off yesterday.

Or rather, how do I put it...? I think that my own reaction is too indifferent. It should be shocking to know that someone dies before your own eyes, but... uhm...

“What about the people who attacked us near the carriage?”

While I was busy thinking about many things, Alica-san asked. Which reminds me, there were more people there, so I wonder if we'd manage to hear something from them. My consciousness was brought back to the reality in a fluster.

“The people who were hired with money seemed to have gotten the negotiation from the security officer. The people who belonged to the restructured group also heard the story of Seiren-sama from the same security officer, as expected.”

“I see... If that's the case, the investigators deduced that the security officer was the ringleader?”

“There doesn’t seem to be any other conjecture than it. The security officer seemed to be shouting about something like how the retirement of the previous family head who appointed himself was Taiga-sama’s intrigue.”

Fubuki-san showed a slightly troubled face. Well, certainly. The security officer that Touka-san counted on held a grudge against the reason behind Touka-san’s retirement. Then, since the successor, Taiga-san seemed to be quite difficult to attack, he targeted me who was Taiga-san’s fiancée and attacked me after gathering up a large number of people, either by money or by something else. That security officer, just where did he manage to gather a sufficient amount of money that he took out to that large number of people? No matter how you think about it, isn’t it strange?

The magician who committed suicide also seemed to be the kind of a person who’d do anything for money, so I think that it was how he went along with them in that direction.

So I thought, but dead men tell no tales... right? No matter how you put it, there’s no such thing as necromancer over here.

Anyway, the group of assailants that was started by the security officer and their source of funds, huh? This isn’t something within the reach of my hands, yup. Let’s leave it up to the garrisons.

“Is that so? Sorry for the trouble and thank you very much.”

“No problem. I will leave the detailed written report over here. Well then, I shall excuse myself now.”

Fubuki-san bowed her head deeply, placed the documents on top of the table, and exited the room. A short while after the door was closed, everyone including me heaved a long sigh. As expected, it seemed that we got nervous when Fubuki-san was here. We really need to get used to it, huh? Putting that aside...

“The previous family head’s retirement, Taiga-san’s intrigue, eh...?”

“The retirement couldn’t be done without any fuss, huh-?”

“That’s right. Though it appeared so in public, but the previous family head couldn’t just retire peacefully.”

At my words that contained an improbable thing, Oriza-san and Minoa-san nodded. Alica-san was silent, but I could see that she slightly nodded. Well, as



expected from having the previous family head suddenly retired and then the position of the Shikino family's head was quickly handed over to Taiga-san, so I think that it's no wonder people would think so.

...Or maybe the family head succession from the previous head, Touka-san, was seen as a very unexpected thing.

"It might be off topic, but..."

Suddenly, Alica-san raised her voice. It seemed that she was silent because she was thinking of something.

"But Seiren-sama and Saryuu-sama have finally arrived here with such troubles, and now for you to just remain inside the mansion, it feels a bit... It's only my opinion, though..."

Ah, that, huh? Certainly, when we wanted to go out today right on the heels of yesterday, Saya-san softly stopped us. Taiga-san was busy with his job as usual and went out flying with Genjirou, but Saryuu also remained in his own room. He likes to run around training himself, so I bet he's turning sour by this time, right?

"But, there was that incident yesterday, after all."

Oriza-san folded her arms and pondered. That's right, as expected, even if we wanted to go out today, the atmosphere wasn't so supportive.

"I still want to go to the harvest festival, although it's not today... Isn't the security quite tight?"

"Saya-san said that the feudal lords and their relatives often slipped into the mass and Taiga-sama was also used to it, so it'd be fine. However, the problem is located at whether or not the incident like yesterday's incident would occur again or not."

Minoa-san seemed to have heard those words very firmly from Saya-san. I see, so that was how the garrisons arrived quite fast yesterday.

Or rather, so that person had often go out to play that the surroundings were also used to him, huh? Well, that doesn't seem to be a bad thing, and that's why he becomes so famous among the fief population. Let's just consider it as a good thing.

However, putting that aside, I want to at least turn up once again at the harvest

festival. Regardless of Saryuu, I want to do that.

“Well, shall we try asking whether we could adjust things somehow, so we could go there? Alica-san, can I ask you to discuss it?”

“Understood. I’ll try asking.”

After all, it seems to be easier for the other party if we were to appear in public.

...That’s why I was told that I brought myself to a tough predicament.

*Ring, ring*

The bell rang. This house uses bells in exchange for knocking. Anyway, Oriza-san vigorously leaped and said, “Yes, ye-s?” After opening the door and exchanged some words, she turned around and called out to me.

“Seiren-sama. It’s Taiga-sama-.”

“Eh! Ah, yes-, please come in.”

Whoa, so he has come home? I stood up in a hurry and brushed off my skirt. No, well, it’s not like there’s some sort of dust on my skirt, but still.

Taiga-san who entered the room seemed to have a slightly stern ambience, but after noticing me, he relaxed himself. Ah, I’m glad. For some reason, if his face stayed as it was, it seemed slightly scary. For a handsome man to be making such a grim face, it’s terribly frightening, after all.

“Taiga-san, welcome home.”

“Yes, Seiren-sama. However, I need to go out again soon in order to continue the meeting from yesterday.”

“Whoa, you’re very busy, huh?”

Yes. However, I feel energized after looking at Seiren-sama’s face. So, it’s going to be okay.”

“Don’t say something like that. Don’t overdo it, okay?”

“I understand.”

Do you really understand? Rather than being similar to his father, Touka-san, Taiga-san seemed to have a similar personality with his uncle, the orphanage director. He is the type of person to work too hard without letting it show on the surface.

Taiga-san took out a white envelope from within his mantle which was not too

long as it was hanging from his shoulders. He then presented it to me with both of his hands.

“That’s right, Seiren-sama. A letter from your acquaintance has arrived. It seems like the sender wants you to read it here with just your maids, with other people cleared out.”

“Eh? Ah, yes.”

After reflexively receiving it with both hands, I pondered about from who it might be. However, it seems that it’s being kept a secret from other people. Such a person, I don’t think I know someone who fits the bill.

“Well then, I’ll be leaving. About the harvest festival, I’ll tell the security to make it stricter.”

“Ah, yes, thank you very much. Take care, Taiga-san.”

When I spontaneously sent him off in front of the door, Taiga-san lightly pat my head and said, “Be careful, Seiren-sama,” and went out of the room. Uh, is this the expected treatment since he’s 10 years older than me?

Well, I will just do exactly as he said... Although I might say, Fubuki-san doesn’t even come inside and only stays outside the door. For the moment, I’ll just shut the door tightly and check the outside from the window.

On the envelope, there is a neat writing that’s different from Taiga-san’s, and “To Seiren-chan” was written there. Oi, I only know one person who’d call me like that. Ah-, as expected.

“...It’s from Leo-san.”

“Oh my-.”

“Oh?”

“Oh dear.”

All 3 maids responded in similar connotation although their pronunciations were different. Saying as if it was as expected-.

I wonder what’s so expected of this? While thinking about it, I returned to the sofa. I removed the wax seal and took out the writing paper and spread it out, now then.

“Uhm. I’m coming to visit here right now, and though I am a little bit preoccupied with some feudal lord’s business, there’s nothing else other than

that, so rest assured. ...No, no, no.”

Before that, there was a normal greeting, [Seiren-chan, are you doing well-?], so I omitted it. Or more precisely, wait a minute.

“He’s going to have some business to do with Taiga-san’s work?”

What’s up with him being preoccupied with another feudal lord’s work? In the first place, isn’t Leo-san going to come here to play?

His identity was unclear from when he first came to our house, but I became unable to understand it even more after him saying that he’d come here. Just what kind of person is he?

For now, let’s read on ahead.

“The harvest festival is really fun, and I’ve been having a good time. Sometimes there were some quarrels, but the garrisons are properly doing their work, so it’s basically safe and I’m so relieved... Leo-san seems to be having fun.”

I see, so it’s safe. I was wondering whether the people who targeted me and Taiga-san would be coming again or not, but if that’s the case, then it seems to be all right.

“Ah, lastly. This is only a secret between me and the feudal lord, and then Seiren-chan, so he said.”

So this is what Taiga-san warned me about, huh? I don’t quite understand about the situation, but it seems that Leo-san wants to keep this secret. In this case, there are my three maids here, too. They have been accompanying me for more than half a year already, so it’s going to be fine. Besides, I also think that Ayato-san and Maito-san are automatically included whenever we’re referring to Leo-san.

“...Which means, this is also a secret from Saryuu-sama, Saya-san, and Fubuki-san?”

“If that’s not the case, then the letter won’t be handed over through Taiga-sama-, I wonder what kind of a thing it is?”

“After all, he visited us here specially, even when he had to quickly go out again of the mansion.”

It seems that what Alica-san said is right. I also shouldn't inform Taiga-san's maids. I don't understand why, but if Leo-san and Taiga-san wanted it to be like that, then we'll just have to do so, right?

Yosh, as I was determined, I looked out over the three people.

"Well then, shall I trouble you to do as we're told to? First of all, this is a secret only known to the four people present here. I think that it might be something that Taiga-san and Leo-san didn't want others to know."

"Of course. I don't quite understand, but it seems that Leo-sama and Taiga-sama had their own considerations, so..."

"Understood-."

"I understand."

I have become more or less familiar with my three maids' differing answers like this. Now then, I wonder what will happen after this?

## Chapter 76: Break Time, Couple's Chat Over Tea

Now then, the next day. Uhm, it's also the third day of the harvest festival. It's relatively easy to wake up in the morning because it's autumn. I mean, since it's either hot or cold, the morning is quite tough. I managed to pass the summer just fine here, but I'm going to prepare for winter from now on. I mean, it will snow, after all.

Yup, well, let's leave that aside.

"Seiren-sama, Saryuu-sama."

When I went for breakfast, Saya-san talked to me and Saryuu. I met Saryuu when I was in the middle of heading to the dining room, so we decided to go there together. Anyway, Saya-san seemed to have been waiting for us in front of the dining room.

She seemed to be in a good mood, so it doesn't seem to be about the assailants.

"It's about the harvest festival. As a result after consulting the garrison station, it seems very likely that we'll be able to manage it somehow if it's a day before the festival's last day."

"The day before?"

Oh-, it seems like we will be able to go there to play. I'm glad. Which means, it will be in three days' time, huh? Saryuu tilted his head because it's not the last day, but well, I see.

"Aah. On the last day, there will be a tidying up after the festival ends, so I think that the shop people are going to be very busy."

"I see. Since they're going to return to their normal life on the next day, right?"

"I think that the garrisons will be quite busy watching over them as the downtown will be quite chaotic at that time. If not, it will still be quite messy from the shops and the carts' proceedings."

"Ah-, the number of thieves might increase, is it? As expected from Nee-sama."

Putting aside about what he meant by as expected from me, Saryuu seemed to understand about it now. Well, if there is a cleaning up after a party at the

mansion, it's not like we'd want to see that, too. He'll surely understand about it, too. I think that he's originally smart, but it might be my biased view as his elder stepsister.

But well, I thought that it would be impossible so I wanted to request a permission to go outside and play once more, but that didn't seem to be the case. While thinking about it, I answered Saya-san, "Thank you very much."

"Then, I'll be looking forward for that day. Please convey my best regards to the garrisons, and thank you for your hard work."

"Understood. Ah, today is Taiga-sama's rest day, so what would you like to do?"

"A rest day... Does that mean he's free today?"

"I somehow managed to get him agree to it under the pretext of having to go quite far away for tomorrow's meeting with the dairy farmer's representative."

Saya-san also told me about it while smiling in a good mood. For her to be able to get him to take a rest forcibly like this, it's somehow amazing.

...Eh, what did she mean by what would I like to do? Well...

"Eh-... Uhm..."

"I'm going to be quite presumptuous as to propose you with the idea of relaxing together in whoever's room, since you two have already been engaged after all. Yes?"

Saryuu and then the other maids except Saya-san simultaneously whistled. Incidentally, me too.

Eh, uhm, in other words, that, yup.

In short, she's telling me to have a date within the house, right? Nah, since we're not yet married, we shouldn't do anything beyond that point.

...I'm still feeling quite uncomfortable when I'm reminded of the fact that I'm a woman. After all, I still addressed myself as "Ore".

No, no, no, let's focus on the question at hand. It's not the right time to escape from the reality.

At least, I can just leisurely drink tea together with Taiga-san, and with that alone, I feel quite happy or relieved.

"...That proposal is quite attractive. As expected, since we're only still engaged, going to Taiga-san's room is a bit..."

“Then, shall we do so in Seiren-sama’s guest room?”

“Ah, yes, please...”

Oi, Saya-san, you planned to do that from the very beginning, right? I feel like your words quickly covered my words just now. Nah, that’s also fine, though. But well, that being the case, it’s necessary for us to do the preparations to invite him. Thinking that I need to ask my maids of it first and the foremost, I turned around and tried asking them.

“Can you prepare us some tea? Though I think it’d be quite difficult since everyone’s also going to have a breakfast soon...”

“Yes. The tea and the tea cakes will all be prepared by the Shiiya’s side.”

“If it’s only preparing for tea, we can do it quickly, so it’s no problem-. Seiren-sama, please be rest assured.”

Ah. Alica-san and Oriza-san seem to be brimming with eagerness as they seem to be enjoying it. Meanwhile, Oriza-san who remained silent alone was... whoa, she showed a bold smile that seemed to say, ‘just leave it to us.’ Hahaha, aah, well, I’ll entrust everything to them. Yup.

“Then, I’ll be relying on you. I’m going to eat my breakfast now.”

“Yes, take care, Seiren-sama.”

After receiving my maids’ bows, I entered the dining room. As I entered, Saryuu quickly approached me and whispered a few words to my ears.

“Nee-sama, your expression is getting softer.”

“S-shut up.”

Ah-, even my younger brother is teasing me. This is not good, I can’t become a stupid woman in love like this.

Yes, a woman.

With Taiga-sama being here, the breakfast’s atmosphere turned livelier in a sense. Thanks to that, I managed to remember the food’s tastes well. When I returned to the guest room, I took a breather and exactly 10 minutes after it, the bell rang.

Alica-san who had finished preparing the tea was leading the way and Taiga-san entered the room with a somehow timid feeling. Hey, this is your own house’s guest room, okay? Though I’m the one using it.



“Excuse me, Seiren-sama. ...That, Saya has done something uncalled for...”  
“Aah, no. Though I thought that it was quite sudden, but I’m happy for being able to leisurely drink tea together with Taiga-san.”

Ah-, what’s wrong with it? That’s why I tried to voice my honest feelings, trying to convey that it was all fine. I wonder if it managed to get conveyed... ah, his expression loosened. I’m glad, it seemed to have gotten through to him.

“I-if you say so, then I’m relieved.”  
“Is that so? Ah, please sit down.”  
“Yes, well then.”

When Taiga-san sat down across the table, the tea and the tea cakes were quickly carried. Eh, this is the shortbread that I ate for the first time when I arrived here. Alica-san brought this out, huh? I feel a bit happy.  
Then, we began talking little by little. Nah, if we’re being silent, then it seems like we’ll just pass the time with being completely silent until the noon.

“Taiga-san, you’re having a day off today, huh?”  
“Yes. I managed to somehow empty my schedule for a day. Though it’s quite unfortunate that I can’t go together with Seiren-sama to the harvest festival...”

I see. Taiga-san can only take a break today, while Saryuu and I will go out to the harvest festival again in three days’ time.  
Well, this can’t be helped too. I think it’s good enough that we managed to spend the time together during the first day, even if it was only for a short while.

“Your work seems to be quite difficult, right? Please don’t overwork yourself, okay?”  
“I understand.”  
“If Taiga-san don’t mind, please be at ease in my room. Though I said so, this is still Taiga-san’s home.”  
“No, no. Then, I will be at ease here.”

Oh my? It looks like that Taiga-san’s smiling face is quite similar to Saryuu’s. As expected of brothers, huh.  
After that, we talked about various trifling matters. As one would expect, there’s no way he’d want to talk about his work during his day off, so we mainly

talked about what Saryuu had been doing, or my story ever since I came back to this world, *etc.*

During the time, sometimes Taiga-san dozed off for an instant. Is he sleepy? It's not like your drowsiness will all go away once you drink the tea.

"Are you sleepy?"

"Ah, no, not that sleepy. It's just that my sleeping hours were quite insufficient."

"As I expected-."

After all, there were lots of paperwork to do even when he returned to the mansion. Moreover, the deadline seemed to be tomorrow morning. I've helped the orphanage director with his household account book before, so more or less, I could understand.

Then, I also know a bit of replenishment method to do when one is tired. However, there are the eyes of the maids here... ah.

"Ah. Minoa-san, Alica-san, Oriza-san, can you please pretend not to see anything for a moment?"

"Yes? Ah, I understand."

"Y-yes."

"Ye-s. Hey, hey, Minoa, let's go to the front room for a moment-."

Alica-san immediately understood. Together with Oriza-san who pushed Minoa-san's back as Minoa-san seemed to not being able to comprehend it for a moment, they went back to the front room. No, really, sorry. As expected, there's no way I can do it with them watching-.

Since they have to monitor the circumstances here, they can't completely close the door. However, after confirming that they have entered the other room, I corrected my posture on the sofa. Then, I arranged my knees together.

"Taiga-san, Taiga-san."

"Eh?"

Look, he dozed off again. Towards Taiga-san who raised his face at my voice, I tried to clap my knees. ...Wait, I wonder if they also have this kind of habit here?

"Uh-m. Is there no such thing as sleeping with your head on someone else's

lap here?”

“Eh, no, there is... b-but...”

Ah, so it also exists here. I’m glad, I’m glad.

“It’s what the orphanage director often did to me when I was tired. At that time, I was still a male and I was still a child, so it felt to me like my own father did that.”

The current Taiga-san is the head of the Shikino family and the feudal lord of this area, so he doesn’t have anyone else to rely on. Though I don’t seem like someone he can really rely on, but I can at least lend my lap like this. Or more precisely, I want him not to borrow someone else’s lap other than mine.

“Come, come. If it’s your fiancée’s lap, nobody would complaint even if you’re borrowing it. Or more precisely, I don’t mind at all.”

After all, isn’t that right?

Even if I were a man right now, I’d lend my lap. Since Taiga-san is someone important to me. Also, thankfully, I am a woman, so I think that the tenderness of my legs will be good to provide Taiga-san a sleeping comfort. Yup.

“Eh, ah, t-then, e-excuse me...”

“Go ahead and feel free.”

Taiga-san who was sitting next to me timidly placed his head on top of my lap. Ah, as expected, it’s quite heavy Well, that’s quite obvious.

Then, when I tried to stroke his hair, he closed his eyes partly as if he was feeling good. ...Are you a dog or a cat, huh? Or rather, I haven’t seen such pet animals with the excpetion of the small horses. Shall I try asking about it next time?

Speaking of trying to ask...

“Have you heard about the harvest festival?”

“If I’m not mistaken, you’ll be going there once more a day prior to its last day?”

Ooh, I’m glad. It seems that he has heard of it from Saya-san. Or did he just hear about it right before he came to this room? Saya-san is so fast at doing her work.

“Yes. If there’s an opportunity, would you please try to talk with Leo-san and

the others? I wonder if it's alright to believe in that person?"

"Yes, I understand... I will tell... That person is... all... right..."

I wonder if he really understands? He went on asleep so quickly.  
Or rather, I see. To Taiga-san, Leo-san seems to be a good person. I was slightly relieved.

For some reason, I'm also getting sleepy. I wonder if I should just sleep... Ah-, but, after this, what are we going to do...

## Chapter 77: Now Then, Plan Determination

“Taiga-sama-, Seiren-sama-. It will be noon soon-.”

“...Ah?”

“Fwe?”

Uh-m, yes?

In the end, Taiga-san who was on top of my lap and I slept like a log and didn't wake up until Oriza-san came to wake us up at the noon. We have slept for approximately 3 hours, hhuh? Hahaha.

Enough, I won't try to make any excuses anymore. It can't be helped, right? Looking at someone else's sleeping face can invite drowsiness.

In addition, the one who woke us up was Oriza-san, and she seemed to be the one who was the best at not being able to read the mood. Aah yup, if one were to look at it, her action of nonchallantly stepping into where there are a young girl and her ikemen lover sleeping with his head on her lap, then she's categorized as not being able to read the atmosphere. ...But it's me and Taiga-san!

“T-thank you... very much.”

Well, Taiga-san who jumped up after sleeping like a log quickly slipped down from the sofa in a mad rush and kneeled down on the ground. This kind of thing also exists even here?

Or rather, why are you kneeling down on the ground after falling asleep when you were borrowing your fiancée's lap? Isn't that weird? Taiga-san becomes way too serious in weird things... so I thought, then I also went down from the sofa and sat on the floor. It might be considered as bad mannered, but I wanted to match my height with him.

“Please don't apologize. I'm the one who lent you my lap. Though I didn't expect that you'd sleep like a log, but I also fell asleep, so we're in it together.”

“Y-yes. I'm really sorry...”

Whoa, he's truly becoming depressed. But well, isn't it good for him to be able to sleep well until noon? After all, his only day off is today, and it seems

like he has to go quite far away tomorrow.

“Taiga-sama, I brought a steamed towel.”

Alica-san estimated the time when we would have calmed down and finally came while carrying a bucket. Inside it, there was a steamed towel that would normally give you a good feeling after waking up in the morning. But, why?

“Uhm, I think you might not notice it, but there are some traces left on your face. It will ruin your appearance.”

“Eh? S-sorry.”

“Ah, it’s true. It seems to be caused by my clothes, sorry.”

I finally realized it when it was mentioned. Around his cheek, there was a trace that seemed to be caused by my clothes’ tuck or something else. Aa-aah, it really ruins a man’s face-. I quickly received the towel and pushed it to his cheek.

Well, it’s okay even if he goes around like that, though. I mean, for an ikemen to be doing or attempting to do everything perfectly... Isn’t that just a mad thing that only exists in another world?

After pushing the towel there for a moment, the trace became almost inconspicuous, so I tried to wipe his face lightly with the towel. Ah, for some reason, it feels like I’m wiping a child’s face. When I was eating my meal in the institution, I had also wiped the faces of the other children that I treated just like my younger brothers, but I tried wiping his face even more slowly and affectionately this time.

“I’m really sorry, Seiren-sama. I ended up troubling you in various ways...”

“I don’t mind. Let’s just think of this as a rehearsal.”

“Eh, ah, yes.”

Nah, why is your face getting red? The one who proposed was you, right? I have become prepared for it in a sense, so please.

Anyway, since it’s time for lunch, we decided to go to the dining room together with everyone. Before going out of the room, Taiga-san turned around to look at me.

“Aah, Seiren-sama. Please be rest assured that I will properly speak with Leo-sama.”

Oh. He properly remembered it.

“I’m glad. You listened well before, huh?”

“Since it’s Seiren-sama’s words, obviously I won’t forget.”

Well said. I wonder why haven’t this person gotten married up until now? He seems to be a very devoted type once he falls in love. ...Or rather, he really fell in love with me, huh? Could it be that it’s because he has a bad taste?

...Even so, Taiga-san will really be accompanied with Leo-san, huh? Really, just what kind of a person is that effeminate man?

As we were eating lunch together with Saryuu as well, we ended up talking about something light that could be finished within the time. No, it’s not about what happened today.

“Speaking of which, when are you planning to return home?”

“Returning home, huh? Uh-m...”

Saryuu and I only thought of nothing else other than our plans here. We have surplus clothes to a certain extent, and speaking of what we’ll be doing once we return home to the mansion, well, it’d be studying. We have to refine ourselves as we’re categorized as rich people.

Anyway, the one who suggested the day we would return home was my younger stepbrother, which was also Taiga-san’s biological younger brother.

“Since we’re going out to play on a day prior to the harvest festival’s last day, isn’t it better for us to return home on the last day? Nii-sama also seems to be very busy with his work here.”

“Hmmm... that’s right...”

Saryuu managed to come up with a good plan after turning his head around, so there won’t be any problem so long as he is properly raised as the heir of Shiiya, right? I just hope he won’t fall for a weird woman, but speaking of weird, the weirdest one would be me.

“Taiga-san, is that okay?”

“That’s right. If it’s the last day’s morning, I’ll be able to send you off.”

In other words, if it’s after that, then his schedule is already packed, right, this person? If that’s the case, I’d like to properly see him and say our farewell. I

don't know when we will be able to meet again once I leave this house, after all.

"Ah-enough, Nii-sama and Nee-sama. It's a distance where you can meet as long as you ride in a carriage for around half a day, so please don't make such lonely expressions like that!"

"I-I'm not making that kind of face, though?"

"I-I'm not making that kind of expression!"

Since Saryuu suddenly said such thing, when I answered in a panic, my voice was a bit hoarse. However, it's not only me. Taiga-san was also like that, so it was a bull's eye for both of us, so it seemed. ...That's right, he just hit a bull's eye, huh? Damn it.

"Both of you just threw in such high voices. Good grief, you two are always flaunting each and every time, please show some consideration to me."

"...Sorry."

"Sorry..."

As expected, when it came to this, we didn't have any other choice than to bow our heads together. I wonder if he was feeling similar to what I felt when I saw Tou-san and Kaa-san? Nah, really, sorry. I have to think about the time and place, right? Really, really.

---

In the blink of an eye, the day passed and finally, it was the day we could go out and play.

While I was in Taiga-san's residence, I took out the clothes that I brought here and tried to pick which one to wear, with the help of my maids. Nah, as expected, my fashion sense right now is still very lacking. Since it's like that, I might end up recklessly wearing things. Sometimes, Maki-san also showed up, so we had also chose my clothes together.

"Isn't it quite flashy? Won't it feel out of place if I wear it to go to the festival?"

"It's fine. It doesn't feel out of place, after all."

"It's cute-, Seiren-sama."

"It suits you really well."

So, I chose a purple-colored dress whose color very much resembled a



berry's. Its collar and wrists areas were white-colored. Since the color is a bit dark, it doesn't look so flashy and it seems like it doesn't feel out of place when I'm around a landscape that is mostly brown in color. I wonder if it's true? As for my hair ornament, as expected, I'm wearing the hair ornament that Taiga-san gave me. Though it's not a spring festival, and it's not like I wish for any insect to approach me, though.

The maids aren't wearing plain civilian clothes, but they remove their hair ornaments and aprons and wear a scarf or a ribbon, or rather, it's quite similar to what they did at the first day of the harvest festival. However, the things that they're wearing right now are different from that day.

So, when we went out until the entrance hall, Saryuu was already waiting there for us while being accompanied by the other maids whose clothing arrangements were the same as our maids. Saryuu was wearing clothes with olive green accent, and at a first glance, he might seem like the young master of some merchant family. He was also wearing a beret that has the same color accent as his clothes, and he looks pretty much cute.

"Waa, Nee-sama, you look really cute."

"Ah, aah, t-thanks, Saryuu. You also look cool."

"That's of course, since I'm going to go out and play with Nee-sama, there's no way I could afford to appear weird."

Saryuu harrumphed and puffed up his chest. Sorry, but when I look at him, he still looks pretty much like a child. Nah, men are supposed to have their growth spurts around his age, so I'll be expecting that. Since he is Taiga-san's little brother, he should have good qualities, too.

Anyway, Kanna-san who was behind Saryuu told me something while smiling happily.

"Saryuu-sama has been trying to choose his clothes after it was decided that we'd be go out to play today."

"Well, Maki-san sometimes also came to my side to ask for my clothes, and that is...?"

"That's because Saryuu-sama wanted to match his clothes with Seiren-sama."

When I opened my eyes wide, Minoa-san nodded as if it was obvious. Ah-, well, with these colors, it doesn't seem like we'd feel out of place, though.

“Seiren-sama also picked a Western-style clothing enthusiastically-.”

“I think that any clothing will definitely suit Nee-sama, though.”

“Haha, thanks.”

At Oriza-san’s words, Saryuu answered with a serious expression. Your speech and conduct are very much similar to Taiga-san’s, huh? Since it seems like you’d welcome a bride quite late with such an impression, this Nee-chan is a bit worried, you know?

Anyway, when I looked at everyone one by one, there was only one person who dressed up like a plain village girl. Needless to say, she was Fubuki-san. Well, she’s in charge of protecting me, after all.

“Speaking of which, will Fubuki-san come together with us?”

“I will be guarding you from a slight distance. In the worst case that something happens again, it will be easier for me to response from a spot slightly apart.”

“I guess that’s true. Then, I’ll be counting on you.”

“Yes, please leave it to me.”

After bowing her head deeply, Fubuki-san left the place first. She was totally like a ninja, as she didn’t make any footsteps when she walked like that.

Well then, shall we go, as well?

## Chapter 78: Long Time No See, The Freeloading Young Man

“Ah, Princess, Little Master. Welcome!”

When I went to the shop where I ate the mitarashi dango on the festival’s first day, the shopkeeper auntie remembered me and gave a warm greeting. It seemed that the bamboo broom that she used the other day was actively used to sweep the store’s front today, too. I wonder if it was fine using it to hit people and whether the bamboo broom was alright or not?

“I’m glad. You really came again, along with Little Master!”

“Yeah. I promised, after all.”

After we took out seats near the table, we quickly made our orders. Though the mitarashi dango was delicious, but today... ah-, looking at the menu, there seems to be ohagi. Let’s order this.

“Thank you very much. From now on, I can boast about how Princess has visited this store twice.”

“Hehe. If that’s really great, then feel free to boast it as much as you like. Ah, I’d like to order this and... this tea, too.”

“I will order the dango that I ate before. As for the tea, I’ll order the same one as Nee-sama.”

“Yes, yes. Everyone, feel free to order, too.”

After Saryuu ordered, the maids also made their orders one after another. For some reason, everyone also ordered green tea. Could it be because I ordered it first? Well, that’s fine, though.

The young waitress who brought the dango and ohagi to us seemed to be Saryuu’s fan, if I had to say it. She normally placed the ohagi that I ordered, but she placed the dango that Saryuu ordered with her glittering eyes as she said, “Here you go!” Haha, that’s good. You’re quite popular huh, dear little brother?

“Little master, your outfit today is so stylish!”

“Eh, really? Thanks, I went through the trouble of choosing it.”

“As expected! Little master, your fashion sense is so good!”

Yosh, Saryuu, that's good for you to stop your words there. No matter what, if you were to say that you chose your outfit so that it could match your big sister's in front of a young lady whose eyes turned into heart shapes from looking at the little master that she admired, I'm really going to retort and pretend I'd hit you, yup.

Well, if it were me, perhaps I might have said that inadvertently. Haha, even if I think about it after becoming a woman, that is still not good-. No matter even if it's your own relative, it's still not good to thoughtlessly talk about another woman in front of another lady. Yup.

"Speaking of which, Princess. What was going on with those rowdy people, in the end?"

"Rowdy people? Aah, the ones who were hit by the bamboo broom?"

"I apologize for showing such an embarrassing thing. After all, it was inconceivable for me that those foolish guys who dared to lay their hands on our young master's princess actually existed in this territory."

"No, it wasn't embarrassing. I was saved instead. Thank you very much."

Auntie, it is exactly because I'm Taiga-san's fiancée that they chose to go for me. So, it's not me, but this auntie seems to really adore Taiga-san, huh? Well, he is a good feudal lord, after all.

"Even I do not understand it very well. I guess they came to extort money or goods from a rich young girl? With the exception of Saryuu, everyone there were all girls."

"Is it because I'm not reliable, Nee-sama?"

"It's because they considered you as a child. In addition, there were quite plenty of opponents, right? I'm sure that they thought they'd be able to succeed even if Saryuu was there."

Saryuu's cheeks turned sulky, but well, it can't be helped. I wonder why didn't those guys take me seriously just because I am a girl? Though it's true that I don't have any redeeming feature, and I also can't fight well.

"They have received their rewards for taking the Shiiya's maids lightly."

"As long as there are these dango and this tea, I'm invincible."

Beside Oriza-san who was smiling as she stuffed her cheeks with the ohagi,

Minoa-san ate up a skewer of mitarashi dango in one go. I see, she likes mitarashi dango, huh?

“Ah, excuse me. If there’s a trick to brew this tea to make it more delicious, would you mind telling me about it?”

“Saryuu-sama, there’s some food sticking on your cheek. It’d be fine to eat more slowly, right? The dango won’t run away, after all.”

“Ah, sorry, Maki.”

Alica-san received her second cup of tea after eating her dango quickly, and while she was at it, she asked for the method to brew the tea. I wonder if it’s all right for me to be expecting it for when we return to the mansion-?

Anyway, Saryuu’s cheek was wiped by Maki-san. Hey you, why is it that you’d eat messily in this kind of a place, when you could eat something neatly when you’re in the mansion? I guess that’s why he’s still viewed like a child, though.

“Really, this tea is so delicious, right? Uhm, where were these tea leaves sold?”

“Aah, it’s also being sold at our store. Since it’s like that, would you like to buy some?”

“Then, that’s good. I’d like to buy these tea leaves, please. Aah, I’m also buying some for Seiren-sama’s portion.”

Kanna-san and Tokino-san got the tea leaves. I’m really grateful for them to also buy some for my portion. Hoo-ray! I can drink green tea even after we return to the mansion, then-!

After taking a short rest, we went out of the shop and walked down the road. There are so many decorations made of the ear of rice on the wall, perhaps it’s something similar to a good-luck charm to pray for the abundant harvest or the well-being of a family, and there are also various things being sold.

The cloth store is selling a tapestry with some patterns that just match the season right now, and also scarves that would be used in the upcoming winter. Since we’ve come all the way here, I let everyone choose one sheet for me to buy them. It can be considered as my return gift for the tea leaves.

I’m not sure if it can be worn or not, but I also bought Taiga-san a cloth that had different color from what I chose. The cloth had the same checkered pattern, and mine was blue, while Taiga-san’s was orange-colored. I’m not sure why I

chose those colors, but oh well.

By the time I went out of the cloth store, suddenly I found an existence that caught my eyes. Eh, what?

“I finally found you, Princess-!”

“Whoa... Ah, it’s plain.”

No, sorry, before I could even greet him, my thoughts leaked out. After all, Leo-san was wearing a plain monotone outfit. However, since the ones together with him, Ayato-san was wearing brown outfits and Maito-san was wearing blue outfits, for some reason, this person became conspicuous in a different sense.

“Oh my, is that your first words to me?”

“S-sorry. Long time no see, Leo-san.”

When he pointed that out with a slightly dissatisfied voice, I bowed my head in a panic. No, really, it was so surprising to see him wearing plain clothes after not seeing him for quite a while. Sorry.

“You see, the clothes that you wore when you flew to our house have been etched in my memories.”

“Ahaha, that’s my bad, then.”

He was literally flying, however it was because he was riding on a horse. This person then clapped my shoulders and shrugged his shoulders while smiling as if he was troubled. I wonder why, but this kind of gesture totally suited this person.

“As you can see, even I can read the atmosphere. I thought that it’d be weird to wear something really red at this harvest festival.”

“The red color would assimilate with the floral leaves, right?”

“That’s right, the cloth will flutter like the Cheria’s floral leaves. Wait, come on, Saryuu-chan!”

Why did you just go along with the joke? Well, in the first place, that’s just how this person is, so it can’t be helped, or well, the two people who are accompanying him are now making an apologetic face. Thank you for your hard work each and every time.

Anyway, there was a voice that came out from among the surrounding fief

population that seemed like it wanted to tease someone.

“Oh my, Prince, are you trying to hit on our Princess? If that’s the case, then I won’t forgive you.”

“No way, I understand. I’m not that reckless to that extent. I was asked by the young master to escort the princess.”

Ahaha, Leo-san laughed as he answered. Eh, Taiga-san, did you really ask Leo-san to do that?

“What, so it’s that kind of thing, huh? Then, please escort her properly, okay?”

“Of course-.”

Towards the auntie who raised her voice just now, Leo-san waved his hand and answered. He glanced at me and then winked with his eyes that looked even plainer than before.

Come to think of it, his make-up was considerably thinner. And that’s how I thought it was plain, didn’t I?

Anyway, I’m a princess, Saryuu is the little master, and Leo-san is a prince, huh? The people here sure have interesting ways of addressing people.

“Well, therefore, can we escort you guys for a short while? Saryuu-chan is also included.”

“Did Nii-sama really ask you to do that?”

“Yes, of course.”

Immediately after Saryuu asked, he nodded and tapped his chest. Eh, did this person unexpectedly have a thick chest? Well, he practiced swordsmanship, so it wouldn’t be weird for him to develop muscles, though.

“I was asked by the young master to protect the princess. If I was asked of such thing, there’s no way I could not accept it, right?”

“T-thanks for your help.”

“No problem, don’t mention it, we’re also sorry for troubling you-.”

“It is us who should say so, sorry for troubling Leo-sama.”

“Sorry. I won’t hold you back.”

For this Leo-san who was smiling almost all the time to be a guard, I guess anyone wouldn’t have realized it, right? Regardless of Ayato-san and Maito-

san's presences. Or rather, Maito-san, I can understand even if you aren't making such a troubled expression like that, so it's alright.

"...Seiren-chan, Saryuu-chan."

Suddenly, Leo-san lowered his voice after turning his gaze around our surroundings. It was as if he deliberately did that in order not to let someone near us to overhear the conversation. In addition, his expression strangely turned serious. When you look at this person like this, he looks quite cool, though.

"Understand? You have to be careful tonight."

"What?"

"Don't lock the louver door that's facing the garden. If something were to happen, please jump out from there. We'll go over there."

...Leo-san finished saying that without even caring for Saryuu's and my expressions which were full of question marks.

In other words, will something happen later? Leo-san was completely talking under the premise that something is bound to happen later.

Or rather, with his way of speaking, it was almost certain that someone would come to assault us tonight, or that's what I felt from it. And, at Taiga-san's mansion, too.

"Something is going to happen, huh?"

"Well, something like that."

I see.

...We have no choice but to be prepared, huh? At any rate, there are still some remnants of Touka-san's faction.

Darn it, don't bother Taiga-san more than this, really!

"...Understood. Saryuu, do you also understand?"

"Y-yes. If Nee-sama says so."

"I'm saved because you two are really sensible. Yosh."

After Saryuu and I nodded, with just the word of "Yosh," coming out of Leo-san, his serious expression vanished. His face returned to the usual smiley face, and then he asked us.



“So, princesses, you’re all going home tomorrow, right? I wonder what would be a good souvenir to give Mondo-ojisama and Maya-obasama?”

## Chapter 79: Going Home, from the Autumn Harvest Festival

“Ha-, so tiireed.”

“Seiren-sama, your manner is slightly bad.”

“...Ah, sorry.”

Towards the words that unconsciously leaked out of my mouth, Alica-san commented. Nah, really, sorry.

I mean... I completely spent the time to choose the souvenirs such as scarves for my mother and neckties for my father with everyone else, including Leo. Along the way, we also properly ate lunch and I also ate a set of cakes as my snack, though.

Ah-, the reason why women needed a long time to go shopping, now I managed to understand it well. As the items were lined up in a horizontal line, this and that were equally good, and it was so difficult to choose.

“Oh dear? Princess is still so young, though.”

Leo-san also commented as he laughed happily. Ah-well, it's true that I'm still young, but this and that are different matters. Ever since I came here, I haven't been exercising that much. There's this fat image branded to rich people, but well, I wonder if I've been gaining weight?

“That's right, but I rarely exercise.”

“I see. Now that you mention it, you were recuperating, right?”

Leo-san interpreted my reply in a different way and nodded in understanding. That's right, for most people, I'm a sick daughter who had been recuperating. I often forget that setting, so I wonder if it will be fine this way?

“Nee-sama, if you're tired, shall we return to the Shikino mansion quickly?”

“That's right. As expected, Seiren-sama might have overworked herself from being in such a high spirit-.”

At Saryuu's words and at what Oriza-san pointed out, I began to think that they might be right. Now that they mention it, I've been playing around without

any restriction, and isn't this the first time ever since I came here? My stamina might have decreased ever since I became a woman, too.

"...Yes, that's right. I still want to play more, but if I were to collapse like that, then I will only become a bother to everyone, right?"

It can't be helped, then. There is still next year's harvest festival, so it will be fine as long as I can come and play again by that time. Besides, these people won't only be here during the festival, they will always be around this neighborhood because this is where they're living.

"Understood. Kanna, prepare the carriage."

"Ye-s, leave it to me!"

"Ah, Minoa-san, go accompany her. It's dangerous to go alone."

"I understand. Then, please come along slowly."

After sending off Kanna-san and Minoa-san who ran together, Leo-san nodded and said, "Yosh". As he turned to look at us, he also glanced at Ayato-san for a moment. When I looked at Ayato-san who nodded, it seemed like they could communicate their intention with just those gestures. That's amazing.

"I'd like to tag along, but I still have quite a bit business to take care of from now on. I will be lending Ayato-san so that he could assist you with bringing the luggage until you reach where the carriages are at."

"Eh, is that all right?"

Since he suddenly said so, I spontaneously widened my eyes. No, I mean, even if Maito-san is there, Ayato-san is also Leo-san's guard, right? If we were to borrow him, then in the worst case that something were to happen to Leo-san... No, it's not like I feel something wrong, though, but still.

"If something were to happen to Princess, I will be scolded by everyone here, especially by the head of the Shikino family. I'm also doing this for my own sake, so just obediently accept it, okay?"

Leo-san answered like that while smiling as usual. Uhm... that part about getting scolded by Taiga-san and the other fief population, that must be a joke, right? At any rate, Leo-san just said to bring Ayato-san with us.

It doesn't feel right to refuse without any reason. Since it's only until where the carriages are, I guess it's fine for us to borrow him for a while. Yup.

“I-if that’s the case... Uhm, is Saryuu also fine with this?”

“Ah, yes. If Nee-sama is fine with this, then...”

“What about everyone else?”

“Yes-. To be honest, I’ll feel saved since he’s going to help us carry the luggage.”

“If that’s the case, then, please lend us a hand, Ayato-san.”

“Please leave it to me, Seiren-sama.”

Saryuu also seemed fine, and judging from Oriza-san’s words that leaked out the maids’ ulterior motive, there didn’t seem to be any dissenting opinion, so we obediently asked for his assistance.

Ayato-san received the luggage casually as if it was something natural and smiled with a nonchalant air. After that, he calmly looked at Maito-san who quietly stood to protect Leo-san’s back.

“Maito, I’ll be entrusting Leo-sama to you.”

“Leave it to me.”

Maito-san only said a few words and slightly nodded as he accepted Ayato-san’s gaze.

“Bye bye-! See ya-!” Leo-san said his farewell words which fell to the same type as Oriza-san’s “unable to read the situation” type, and then he disappeared among the crowd of people along with Maito-san. We also decided to quickly go to the carriage’s spot.

As we walked together like this, I vaguely felt the urge to ask something to Ayato-san who was walking behind me. Though I think that he may not answer me properly.

“...It doesn’t seem like Leo-san came here just to play around, right?”

“Why do you think so?”

Ayato-san calmly asked back. I answered, “I guess it’s my intuition,” and then I tried to stick another reason to my answer. I was more or less curious about it, so it isn’t like I’m fully fabricating my reasons.

“He seemed to have something to discuss with Taiga-san, and he also paid me a great attention, so...”

“Leo-sama has a slightly meddlesome personality. That’s why Maito-san and I are sometimes troubled.”

Ayato-san's answer to my remarks was still quite ambiguous. But well, it seemed like he seriously paid a great amount of attention to me, so I was thankful for that. My first impression for him was quite bad, but it has been improved quite considerably. Yup.

"Seiren-sama."

As soon as we arrived at where the carriages are, my name was suddenly called. Since it's a voice that I've gotten familiar with for these past few days, I can quickly know who it is, so I felt relieved. Speaking of which, she was looking over us from a slightly distant place, right?

"Ah, Fubuki-san. Have you come to pick us up?"

"Yes. I thought that it'd be time for you to go back soon."

"Thank you very much. Everything seems to be all right today."

"That seems to be the case. I'm relieved that nothing happened. The carriages have been prepared over there."

Though she was dressed in a village girl style, her mannerism when she deeply bowed was clearly a maid's. Fubuki-san extended her hand and pointed at the direction where the carriages were waiting. Ah, Kanna-san and Minoa-san are waving their hands side-to-side over there.

"Seiren-sama, is it okay to place your luggage over there?"

"Ah, thank you very much, Ayato-san. We're really saved. I think you can put them at where Minoa-san is."

"Understood."

Ayato-san hadn't taken the luggage down even once. He then brought the luggage and placed it next to where Minoa-san had been waiting. The two of them then began to load the luggage, so it seemed like they agreed to put the luggage there. Nah, it wasn't something too heavy or too bulky, but even so, we were told that the luggage shouldn't be placed on the carriage where Saryuu and I would be riding in. They really bothered with strange things like that huh? Really.

When they were done, Ayato-san came back here. Then, he bowed his head at me and Saryuu.

"It's finished. With this, I will excuse myself."

“Yes. Really, thank you very much. Please give my best regards to Leo-san.”

“I will convey it to him. Seiren-sama, please don’t forget Leo-sama’s words.”

After he made sure of it, he bowed his head deeply at us again. After that, Ayato-san left us.

His way of walking, along with his posture that was similar to Yuzuruha-san’s, seemed pretty, and he barely made any sound of footsteps. I wonder if all of the male servants or employees are having that way of walking?

After his retreating figure disappeared among the crowd, Fubuki-san suddenly looked at me with a curious expression.

“Is he your acquaintance?”

“Yeah. To be more accurate, he’s my acquaintance’s escort, and he helped us to bring over our purchased goods.”

After answering, I remembered something and quickly took out one scarf from the luggage I was carrying, so that I could quickly hand it over. It’s a scarf with a deep crimson floral leaves pattern, and it’s overall a simple scarf. Strangely, Maito-san was the one who told me that this color might have matched well with the green-colored uniform that the Shikino maids are wearing.

“This is a souvenir for Fubuki-san.”

“Eh?”

And I intended to give that scarf to Fubuki-san. She suddenly ceased to move, then she alternately shifted her gaze towards my face and the scarf many times over.

“For me?”

“Yes. Please consider this as a reward for protecting me.”

After all, I have brought something for everyone, and I’ve also been indebted to Fubuki-san.

When I said those words affectionately, Fubuki-san’s face showed a thinking expression for a little bit. And then, she obediently received the scarf.

“...Thank you... very much.”

Ah, she was being bashful. Her smiling face normally looks cute, so this is very

unfortunate. Well, I will be wondering about what's wrong if she were to smile without being able to read the atmosphere just like Oriza-san, though.

“Now, shall we go home?”

“Yes-.”

As expected, my voice becomes a sign as everyone begins to ride the carriages after that.

Saryuu, it's fine for you to be the one who take the command, okay? Someday, you're going to be the head of the Shiiya family, after all.

...At any rate.

Don't forget Leo-san's words, is it?

## Chapter 80: Abruptly, A Late-at-Night Visitor

Taiga-san also returned for dinner. I didn't mean to emphasize how this would be our last meal together before going back, but it feels nice to be able to eat together with everyone like this.

"Since Seiren-sama is going to return tomorrow, it's natural for me to want to have a dinner together, right?"

"I also thought so, and that's why I've prepared everything."

Saya-san commented at Taiga-san who said that thing while smiling happily. No, is this a retort instead of a comment? Well, as for me, I'm happy that I can eat the meal together with Taiga-san, so, whatever.

...Or rather, the grilled sanma is so delicious-. Nah, I have never expected that I could eat sanma again ever since I came to this world. Well, since this is a dinner at a feudal lord's house, the meal is decorated with many toppings such as vegetables, but fundamentally, it's a grilled sanma. It has salt and lemon as its spices, and as expected, they taste great-. As expected, there was no grated daikon, though, which is unfortunate.

"Seiren-sama, do you like that fish?"

"Ah, yes. It has similar tastes with the fish that I often ate during autumn over there."

"Is that so? Then, I'm glad. Do you still remember Kadzuki-dono who came to your debut party last summer? The fish seems to have been purchased from his town's harbour."

"Kadzuki-san? Ah-, I remember."

The person that has an obvious vibe of a fisherman, huh? During that night, he needed to take care of the fish-catching business the next morning, so he returned in a hurry.

I see. His harbour has many fishes similar to sanma fishes, huh? I have to remember this. It'd be good if I can eat it again in the future.

As I was thinking about it, I realized that Saryuu's eating pace is worsening than his usual one. Oh? Could it be that he doesn't like it?



“I don’t really like this fish... It’s greasy.”

“I think that it’s fine since it’s seasoned with lemon, too. Besides, the taste of the oil is good.”

“Uu... I-I’ll try my best to eat it!”

Since I like it, so you’re going to try your best and eat it too, huh? I wonder how I should think about it. However, I’d be happy if he comes to like the taste of the sanma over here. I wonder if Saryuu will come to understand the good quality of this meal once he grows up a bit more?

The dessert that appeared was a mont blanc with fruits on top of it—and the fruits were similar to Japanese chesnuts, its sweetness was moderate, so it was easy to eat. The tea was a normal black tea, well, I guess it matches the dessert better this way.

After we completely ate up everything, the dinner finally ended. Haa, I’ve eaten well today. I think that I also ate quite a lot at the festival venue, but it was fine since I was also walking around.

“Thank you for the meal. It was really delicious.”

“Aah, then that’s good. Let’s also tell the chef about it.”

“Please don’t overdo it, okay? I think that the ones who understand the best about the most delicious seasonal food would be the merchants and the chefs, after all.”

“That seems to be the case. However, I want to let Seiren-sama taste your favorite fish meal again next year.”

Uhm, Taiga-san, why did you have that smile on your whole face that seemed like you were saying, “I did it!”? Or rather, will I come here next year? ...Well, if that’s the case, then that’s good. Let’s eat sanma together again.

Suddenly, Saryuu left his seat. He quickly went out of the dining room. Eh, did I do something?

“...I will sleep earlier. Well then, good night, Nii-sama, Nee-sama.”

“Ah, yeah, night, Saryuu.”

“Good night-...”

Taiga-san and I followed his retreating figure until it was out of our sight. After that, we unconsciously looked at each other.

“...Could he have been exasperated at us?”

“...That seems to be the case.”

Eh, since when did his face become so close to mine? Taiga-san is standing right next to my seat, huh? I really hadn't realized it, and apparently, the younger brother was tired of our flirting around like this. Really sorry, Saryuu. Or say, a woman's heart in love is truly bothersome, right? When I let my mind wander, I really couldn't see the surroundings. Good grief, I have to be more careful. ...If I was really that careful, I think that there won't be such a talk about getting engaged with Taiga-san in the first place, though.

When I returned to the guest room while being escorted by Alica-san and Fubuki-san, Oriza-san and Minoa-san was tidying up the room. Since we're going to leave this place tomorrow morning, everything has been packed up, with the exception of the minimum necessary things. Although I said that, I don't really have much baggage as usual.

“I'm back-. The baggage has all been packed?”

“Yes. After this, we only need to pack up things such as tonight's pajamas and the rest of the stuff that will still be used tomorrow morning.”

“I see. Thank you.”

I also tidied up small things such as hair clips, and then I drank the tea that Fubuki-san brewed together with the others. Well, I think that it'd be nice to sleep after this. While thinking about it, I took one sip of the tea. Ah, this is the tea that I like.

“Then, I will excuse myself. Please have a nice sleep.”

“Ah, yup, good night, Fubuki-san. Really, thank you.”

Everyone followed Fubuki-san who went out of the room after bowing and carrying the tea until she was no longer in our line of sight. No, really, I've been greatly indebted to her, right? I don't think that it'd be enough for me to convey my gratitude with just that scarf.

Before very long, I dozed off—perhaps I was too tired. I woke up for a moment as I was taken aback, but after that, I quickly dozed off again-, or so I felt. Ah-, I might seriously be very tired, then.

“Oh my? Seiren-sama, are you sleepy-?”

“...Ah-, yup, I’m really... sleepy...”

“I see-. Minoa, help me out-.”

“Roger that.”

Oriza-san called Minoa-san, and the two of them carried me over to the bed. During that time, Alica-san tidied up the tea.

Minoa-san put me down on the bed and Oriza-san laid the futon. After that, she put her finger on my forehead. I wonder if it is some kind of a good-luck charm?

“Okay, we’ll be going back to the mansion tomorrow, so let’s call it a day for now-.”

“Yes, thanks...”

Oriza-san nodded and smiled at my answer, and Minoa-san also touched my forehead with something... or that’s how I felt. I mean, I was too sleepy, and I couldn’t really open my eyes.

“Well then, Seiren-sama, good night.”

“Night-...”

...ah, really, right after I was dragged to the bed, I’m so... sleepy...

---

*Zap!*

“...?!”

At the sudden impact, I opened my eyes quickly. My consciousness was good, but my head was strangely heavy.

...It felt like at that time when I was influenced under Touka-san’s magic.

[Tch, barrier, huh?!] “Barrier...?”

Ah-not good, not good, I could hear someone’s voice. It was someone else other than Oriza-san, Alica-san, and Minoa-san. ...so, who the hell is this someone, then? Darn it. When I tried to straighten up my body forcibly, ah-, for some reason, my whole body was sluggish. Did I play too much?

Anyway, after I got up to the extent that I could do, I shook my head a couple of times and I finally understood what was going on.

There were some electric shocks running around my surrounding, and there was also a barrier. Beyond it, under the shining light, there was someone with

black clothes from head to toe with their face hidden, and that person was holding some edged tool that was easy to distinguish on their hand.

Yes, that person was definitely an assassin, right? Yup. As I thought, tonight I shouldn't escape from the reality, or more precisely, I should pull myself together. Or rather, who put up this barrier?

...Ah.

“Jigen-san's amulet charm...”

Apparently, the amulet charm that Jigen-san gave me seemed to have been put into operation and have always been active ever since I carried it around. It somehow shone gently.

“Seiren-sama!”

“I'm all right!”

I answered in a shout at my maids who quickly jumped in vigorously and sent the partitioning screen flying. At the same time, the room's light was turned on, and I could more or less see the state of affairs. Although I might say that there were only my maids being added to the previous state of affairs that I saw. Or rather, everyone hasn't changed their clothes yet?

My maids are lining up next to the door, and between them and the bed where I'm in, there's the assassin. The only path I can run to is... the window only, huh? Yup. As expected, there's no way I can risk myself and attempt to run pass by the assassin to go to my maids' side.

Then, the black-clothed person shouted as if they lost their mind.

[Why have you woken up?! There should have been a drug mixed in!] “As I expected! It was as Oriza said.”

“Right, right-?”

Minoa-san showed an admiring expression, while Oriza-san showed a complacent smile. Which means, my head felt heavy because I drank some drugs, huh? ...Or rather, when was it? When did I drink such a thing?

“You shouldn't have underestimated Kasai Jigen-sensei's disciple-. I have put on a detoxification magic spell too-, though it was only slightly effective!”

“Most likely, the drug’s mixed to the tea we drank after returning to the guest room.”

“Yes?”

Well, let’s set aside the thing about how Oriza-san has completely become Jigen-san’s disciple for now. Nah, I was really helped by it in various ways, though. The problem lies in Alica-san’s words that came after Oriza-san’s statement.

The tea that I drank after returning here, which means, it’s the tea that was brewed at the front room. How could the drug be put in that place?

It was very unthinkable for me that my maids might be able to do such a thing. In the first place, the one who made that tea was...

[Die, little girl! It’s all your fault...!]

Before I could think further, the assassin suddenly extended their blade. From her empty palm, Oriza-san then spread out a barrier which had the same light as the barrier that was created previously and had it covered the maids.

“Don’t joke around with me, who’s going to die?!”

The raised blade seemed to have received some electric shocks in some way or another. However, the light became weaker. Ah-, is it the limit, huh?

Don’t lock the louver door that’s facing the garden. If something were to happen, please jump out from there. We’ll go over there.

I suddenly recalled Leo-san’s words. Everyone also remembered those words, and that’s why the window that was located behind me should be able to be opened without having the need to worry about the key.

*Zap*, along with the intense sound, the electric shock disappeared. Towards the black-clothed person who faltered for a moment, I threw the thing that was next to my side. The thing that collided against that person was a big pillow that had been under my head until just now.

[Bu-!] “Ha!!”

Minoa-san also seized that chance. She kicked the floor and attacked the black-clothed person’s chest with a roundhouse kick. The black-clothed person received the attack with her arms and quickly did a counterattack using the

blade that had been extended long. The attack that was aimed for both Oriza-san and Alica-san at the same time was repelled by the barrier that was created again.

Yosh, their mind was focused there. ‘Now is the chance!’ so I thought as I ran to the window. When I opened the curtain, the stars outside were very bright. The louver door wasn’t closed, huh?

I also opened the glass door that wasn’t locked. At that moment, there was something that flew right next to my head. Eh-, could this be something like a shuriken? Is that person a ninja?

[It’s useless even if you try to escape outside!]

The black-clothed person that fared well against three people said something, but rather than the person who came here to try to kill me, I’d believe in Leo-san’s words. That’s why, I rolled up my pajamas’ bottom edge and forcibly climbed over the window frame.

“Owa!”

“...Are you all right?”

“He?”

My body that awkwardly tumbled down was actually falling to someone’s arms as if it was natural. Or rather, it’s a voice that I’ve grown used to hearing, though?

“E-eh? Could it be... Taiga-san?”

“Yes.”

Taiga-san who was illuminated by the starlight nodded with a serious gaze. Or rather, why would the lord of the mansion be in this kind of a place? Did he already assume this situation?

“Yup, you had properly listened to what I said. I’m glad.”

In addition, I heard another person’s voice. When I raised my face in a hurry, Leo-san was smiling brightly as Ayato-san and Maito-san accompanied behind his back. With a deep crimson mantle hung on his shoulders—hey you, with that kind of a figure, are you a prince from some place? Or rather, the ring that he wears is quite big. It was around the size of the wax seal stamp that I use. Using the hand that was wearing that big ring, Leo-san was casually toying

around with a small knife that seemed to have been sent flying outside just now.

## Chapter 81: Restrain the Late Night Visitor!

Taiga-san who held me firmly stepped behind as if he was sliding. In exchange of that, there was someone else who stepped forward. It was Saya-san who was wearing her maid uniform firmly. The thing that she held with both hands, could it be a tonfa? So, it also exists here, huh?

“Seiren-sama, I’m really glad that you’re fine.”

She glanced over her shoulders and looked at me before she calmly smiled. Yup, perhaps she was satisfied at my nodding, Saya-san quickly returned her gaze towards the black-clothed person.

“Oh well, Taiga-chan, you’re quite careless, huh? You were also drugged.”  
“I’m ashamed. I’m saved thanks to the detoxification magic spell that was put on me beforehand.”

As he gazed over the surroundings, Leo-san talked with his usual manner of speech. When Taiga-san replied as if he was embarrassed, I looked up at his face casually.

“Taiga-san also received the drug?”

“That’s right. Fortunately, Saya is slightly familiar with magic.”

“Though my big sister is poor at magic, I can use it to some extent just fine.”

Hee. As I thought that Saya-san was actually capable of using magic, Taiga-san looked into my face.

“...It was the same with Seiren-sama, huh?”

“It seems that magic is Oriza-san’s forte.”

“I see.”

With the situation being like this, I only told the facts. I think that Taiga-san would be able to understand it properly with just that, and in addition, I felt like it would be fine as long as he understood that fact.

Suddenly, the surroundings became bright. If I were to phrase it using the words from the other world, then it was a lamp similar to a street light, or rather, if there is something like that, then just use it from the very beginning!



Or was it turned off beforehand by the one who came to attack us? Perhaps that might be the case.

Then, when I thought that we were surrounding the black-clothed person, it appeared that there were more black-clothed people around us. There seems to be around 10 people. The other side seems to be serious with this assault.

“Ta-Taiga-san...”

“Everything is fine, Seiren-sama.”

...Was I so pathetic? I don't have any power, I also can't do any magic, and I can only cling to Taiga-san. And since I'm clinging on him, it seems that I'm getting in the way of Taiga-san's sword.

“Nee-sama, Nii-sama!”

In a short time that I got indulged in my own thoughts, Saryuu also ran here while taking along three maids. I could see how the black-clothed people faltered for a moment when these people saw them coming. Was it unexpected for them to come?

“W-what's going on, this...?!”

[Wha...?! Why are you still alive?!]

Oii, did you plan to kill even Saryuu, huh, you bastards?! Saryuu is originally this family's child, you know? Why would you feel any need to deal with him as well, these guys?! Ah-damn it, why don't I have any power to fight them? Be that as it may with me, but I don't want to remain silent when they also target my little brother.

“Oh my-, morning, Saryuu-chan. Are you all right?”

“I'm not all right! After Tokino knocked me 'til I woke up, suddenly there was a black-clothed person already toppled over!”

“I'm sorry. I'm not adept at magic, so I can only resort to physical means to wake you up.”

Leo-san's tone of voice was still the same as usual. I wonder how far does this person understand the current situation?

Towards Saryuu who was still angry, Tokino-san who was next to him lightly bowed her head apologetically. Or rather, by physically, did she seriously knock Saryuu until he woke up?

“I’m sorry. Kanna and I were also knocked by Tokino and woke up from it.”  
“And then, why did the drug have no effect on Tokino?!”  
“It’s my genetic predisposition.”

Maki-san, Kanna-san, and even Saryuu—when you take a closer look at them, their cheeks are slightly red. It seemed like everyone was woken up by Tokino’s slap on the cheek.

Tokino-san answered nonchalantly, but just what kind of genetic predisposition does she have, for the drug to not be effective at her? Wouldn’t it be bad for her if she gets sick?

“Well, putting that aside, I have smashed up all three assassins who were sent to Saryuu-sama.”

“Only one person was sent to Seiren-sama, huh? I guess that person must be very skillful, then.”

Apparently, Tokino-san’s fists were directed right on the mark to the enemies. Or rather, the other side got all three people smashed up by Tokino-san, meanwhile, even though there was only one assassin here, but 3 maids couldn’t defeat them—just how much their ability differs?

Even so, it seems that it was unforeseen for the black-clothed person who attacked me that the other side’s three people was knocked down.

[Ridiculous... Though their positions are lower, I hadn’t expected them to lose!] “Please don’t take the Shiiya’s maids so lightly.”

“The Shikino’s maids, too. You should have known about it the best, right?”

In response to the black-clothed person’s words, Oriza-san and then Saya-san answered.

...Hm?

You should know it well?

“I already know that it’s you. Show us your face, Fubuki.”

Taiga-san spat out an order. After clicking their tongue for a little while, the black-clothed person tore off their mask. The face that appeared underneath the mask was really Fubuki-san.

Then, the one who put the drug in the tea that we drank was...

“Taiga-chan, she is your maid...?”

“Yes. She promised to follow me after my father’s retirement, but...”

In response to Leo-san’s question, Taiga-san nodded with a loathsome expression. Leo-san then snorted and scowled at Fubuki-san.

Then, there was a sound of feet shuffling on the ground. It seemed that there was one person among the black-clothed people that surrounded us who slightly moved.

However, Maito-san immediately stepped forward a little bit and dealt with that movement. What’s more, right after he stepped in, he also smashed the person up. With that impressive scene, the black-clothed group’s movement was obstructed.

“The previous family head shouldn’t have handed over his headship to the young master that quickly! The young master must have plotted something and banished the previous family head!”

Fubuki-san raised her voice that I’ve grown used to hearing. So that was their opinion.

Well, leaving the plots or intrigues aside, the previous family head... in other words, Touka-san—it’s true that he retired being the head of the family, though.

“If we can expose the treason and banish the young master, the previous family head will be able to return once more. That’s also for the sake of the Shikino family.”

“So you attacked Nee-sama for that reason?!”

“Well, leaving aside the thing about for the sake of the Shikino family, the procedural should be like that, though?”

When Fubuki-san’s words paused for a moment, Saryuu shouted, and then Leo-san speedily opened his mouth. He lightly shrugged his shoulders and shifted his gaze around the group of the black-clothed people who surrounded us. With just that, the black-clothed people’s shoulders quivered.

“Do you think that kind of a thing will be exposed through this situation? No matter how people look at it, they can only see it as how you’d want to thwart

the Shikino family.”

“If Shiiya family’s children die, the young master’s position would turn bad in one go as you were the one who invited them over as guests. If the head of the Shiiya family becomes mad, we’d be able to remove his (Taiga’s) head from his neck.”

“With that, the previous family head can return and the Shikino family will be at peace? There’s no way that can happen, the possible option would be to crush the whole family down. The Shiiya family are the royal family’s relatives, so more than just their head of a family, it will also incite the anger of the royal family.”

“Then, we will just serve the previous family head until we can raise a new family name. Either way, we will have the young master and the children of the Shiiya family to die here. The same goes for you.”

Ah, this is not good. The conversation isn’t going so smoothly.

Fubuki-san and the others seemed to be very determined to kick out Taiga-san and to have Touka-san return, or they have set their heart on that goal. Could it be that they knew that he wasn’t Shikino Touya, but instead, the younger brother Touka? It was quite possible, if I may say.

Or rather, so they targeted me for that, huh? If they just go and directly kill Taiga-san, it’s very easy to guess that the ones who did it were Touka-san’s people. Despite the sequence of events that led them to change the head of the family. Ah well, it doesn’t look that way in public, though.

That’s why, they targeted me who is Taiga-san’s fiancée. Though I’m quite certain that it’s still easy to guess that the mastermind is Touka-san’s people even if they also targeted me. However, if it were to be known to public that I were to die in Taiga-san’s mansion, Taiga-san’s fame would also fall because he wasn’t able to protect me.

...Though I can’t be sure whether the fief population would leave Taiga-san with that or not.

“If you said that you wanted to protect the old Shikino, then that’s fine. However, the current head of the Shikino family is me.”

Then, the person involved—Taiga-san himself was in an extreme anger. That kind of reasoning was quite preposterous and embarrassing, but well, that’s a

secret.

“It’s also quite ridiculous for you to want to lay your hands on Seiren-sama. If you don’t leave immediately, I will dispose everyone of you in the name of the head of the family.”

That’s why, don’t say it. There’s no way they’d just consent by just having the blade of the Shikino family head turned towards them.

And certainly, if something were to happen to me, the relationship between the Shikino and the Shiiya family will be ruined—even I can understand it.

Nevertheless, Taiga-san glanced at me for a moment. Despite I know how seriously angry he is, why is it that he’d go smiling only when he looks at me? Really, for being able to change his expression so quickly like that is amazing. I’m honestly impressed, and I’m so happy with that, as it feels like a special treatment.

“It’s all right, Seiren-sama. As long as Leo-sama intervenes, we won’t be at a disadvantage at all.”

“That is right-. Fufu, please be rest assured. Though I may appear like this, I still understand how to use my authority.”

“Authority?”

“...I see. Seiren-chan, you still don’t know much about me, huh? As expected of a girl who has led a sheltered life.”

Leo-san squinted his eyes as if he was really having fun. His gesture of raising his reddish hair was quite amorous, and it was at a level that I couldn’t match at all. Nn, no, this is no time for me to say such a thing.

Or rather, authority, he said, huh?

“My name is Sumeragi Leo. Though you don’t know my face, but this name and this wax seal type, you should have recognized it, right? With the exception of Seiren-chan.”

“Sumeragi... w-what?”

After listening to that name which Leo-san just brazenly introduced himself as, Saryuu and everyone from the black-clothed group stiffened their bodies. Uhm, since it’s weird for me not to recognize it, is it a name that is well-known at the same level as a common sense?

Towards them, Leo-san nimbly turned the back of his right hand and showed it to them. When I looked at the gem embedded in his ring... No, it isn't a gem. It's a wax seal stamp in which the crown mark was engraved.

It's the same crown mark that's used in the wax seal of letters sent out by the royal family.

Ah-, uhm, is this it? The pattern that I usually see in historical drama?

Which reminds me, I have never heard anything about the royal family. It seemed to be a very common sense that nobody hadn't told me at all, huh?

“Our country is managed by the royal family of Sumeragi. The head of that family is the king, and that king's first child is his Highness, Leo. Make sure to engrave that in your mind, peasants!”

Ayato-san's voice as he said the expected words reverberated in the night sky.

## Chapter 82: Confession, The Past Circumstances

As expected, the black-clothed army didn't prostrate themselves on the ground. However, they stepped back behind Fubuki-san. Ah, thanks to this, it seems that this siege will soon be solved.

Anyway, it is not a time when I can escape from the reality. I unconsciously reaffirmed it to Taiga-san.

"...The king's first child, in other words, he is the prince, isn't he?"

"That's right. Didn't the fief population all call him as the prince?"

When I was asked back, I remembered and thought, 'Now that you mention it'. When I was together with Leo-san, the auntie who's also the fief population called him 'Prince'. I thought that it was a figurative speech only, because Taiga-san is the young master and I was called 'Princess'.

"...Eh, so it's because he was truly a prince?"

"That is right."

"I also go here and there, though it might not be as many times as Taiga-chan, but then, there are still people who recognize me. Although I'm still called as 'Prince' even by strangers."

After Taiga-san nodded, Leo-san continued to explain while shrugging his shoulders. Aah, I seeeee. So, his face is well-known here.

Putting that aside, for some reason, I don't feel like he sends off an aura or a feeling that he's a prince. Nah, perhaps I'm quite dull at this kind of thing, though. I'm still not accustomed to being a feudal lord's daughter, too. If that's the case, then another reason comes to surface.

"...Say, why did the prince come here in the first place?"

"Hmm—, to conduct an investigation of the Shikino family."

"Investigation?"

"Right. It's an investigation regarding how Taiga-chan suddenly took over the house, and how there were a lot of servants and employees being replaced. Since the same thing happened 30 years ago, people couldn't help but speculate that there might be something. And as expected, it also became a

popular topic even at the capital.”

When I thought of the subject of Leo-san’s smooth answer just now, it was actually the story that wasn’t someone else’s problem—it was closely related to me.

30 years ago. In other words, it was the story during when Touka-san expelled the orphanage director and succeeded as the head of the Shikino family as [Shikino Touya].

Touka-san fired the servants and employees who supported the orphanage director and gathered the people around him who had supported him. Then, he protected the territory of the Shikino by using the name ‘Touya’. As far as it goes, he properly did his job as a feudal lord, so there wasn’t any problem in public.

Then, suddenly, he retired this summer. Taiga-san succeeded him and discharged the servants and employees who were on Touka-san’s side. This is something that’s closely related to the fact that I and the orphanage director were tossed to a different world. That matter didn’t go to public, though. But well, it isn’t that weird for people to start wondering if something might be going on with that.

“Anyway, Father couldn’t directly come to investigate things, right? That’s why I received the full authority to come and investigate things. It would be suspicious for me to directly come to the Shikino territory, so I went to my relatives—the Shiiya family’s house first.”

No, no, no, no. Wait for a second, First Prince—for someone with that status to directly move, that’s already something else, but before that.

By ‘father’—which means it would be about the king, right? Why did he feel like wanting to come and directly investigate the matter?

Could it be that the royalty of this world is relatively active? Am I really related to that kind of a family? I wonder if even a drop of their blood also runs in my veins?

Anyway, Saryuu was listening to the conversation absentmindedly, and then he whispered without even thinking it through.

“Relatives? That’s...”

“Oh my, I didn’t tell any lie, okay? There’s the royal family’s blood in the Shiiya



family lineage, so wouldn't it be right for me to address the Shiiya family as my relatives?"

"Now that you mention it, you were introduced as a distant relative's eldest son. Certainly, that is not wrong, but..."

Saryuu was greatly perplexed. Nah, even I also think that I'm also perplexed, though.

Certainly, the royal family and our family are distantly related, and the First Prince also means the eldest son, right? Smooth words make smooth ways, huh? Yup.

"Now then, about the result of the investigation."

After scowling at Fubuki-san who moved only a slight bit and made her body stiffened, Leo-san turned his gaze towards Ayato-san. Or rather, to put it frankly, the black-clothed group couldn't really move well as they were being overwhelmed by the prince aura.

"The previous head, Shikino Touya-dono retired due to an illness, and there wasn't any problem with it. However, the servants and the employees that were hired by the previous family head and were paid with a high salary that didn't seem to be worth it—they were all discharged at the same time as his retirement. This is the decision of the current family head, Taiga-dono."

The words that Ayato-san spun were their investigation result. Leo-san would return to the capital with this document, huh? I won't know anything that would happen from there onward, because it is out of my reach. It is also something that Taiga-san can't do anything about, so I think, and I tightly grasped his hand. Ah, Taiga-san's hand also squeezed my hand back.

"Thirty years ago, there was also a mass dismissal of the servants and employees done similarly when Touya-dono received the family headship from his predecessor, but at that time, there was no problem related to their salary. It was only related to the family headship quarrel that arised between the eldest heir and his younger brother of a different mother."

"Where did Shikino Touya manage to raise the funds to pay his employees such a high salary? The special products of the Shikino territory consisted of farm products and wool. However, some of the luxury goods have been priced higher

slowly from 30 years ago, and currently, if we take the price alteration into consideration, it has been increased not less than three-fold the price at that time.”

Ah-, in other words, they raised the price of the special products and the difference in the price entered their pockets, huh? Which means, there were also some merchants who conspired together, then. Is this something similar to a story titled, “The Legend of Bright-Yellow Pies”? Nah, I’m not sure how to phrase the term “bribery” in this world, though.

“The goods which price was increased were nothing other than the expensive kinds of goods produced only in the territory of the Shikino, so this didn’t really influence the general population.”

“In a sense, this is shadow money. Since the goods can only be produced here, it is not known about how much the production cost has increased or how much have they increased the price. In addition, they also increased the price steadily from 30 years ago.”

I see. Since raising the whole price of the goods would be dangerous to the fief population, they only increased the price of luxury goods that they could wring out from the other feudal lords or the likes of them, huh? No matter what, it was important to ensure the security of their standing. That’s why, he worked on it for his 30 years of serving as a feudal lord.

I guess Touka-san was someone who worked hard and made efforts in the wrong way. If only he’d work hard normally, then there shouldn’t be anything wrong.

“Then, he hired some shinobi with that money. During the period of 30 years, the former employees of the Shikino mansion passed away in successions. It was said to be caused by illness or accidents, but what do you think?”

Oi, oi, oi. Nah, I certainly have heard about this story, though. Or rather, I wonder how they’d be able to tie everything together? Although it’s too late, I’m starting to shudder now. How can I shudder? I mean, I’m safe and sound despite what happened in the past. And my mother, too.

“Uhm... In other words, what does that mean?”

As expected, since the explanation was excessively long and as a result of

various things mixing up, Saryuu seemed to be unable to comprehend it. Then, Leo-san who noticed it suddenly smiled. Even though he was only normally smiling, the black-clothed people became surprised once more. What? Could it be because his thirst for blood is directed to you guys?

“I see. It seemed to be slightly too difficult for Saryuu-chan. Ayato.”

“Yes. In short, it seemed that there were circumstances that the previous head of the Shikino family didn’t want to be known to public. The servants and employees who were aware of the circumstances—some stayed within the residence and received high salary, and some were expelled after receiving a large sum of money. On top of these two groups, there were also some whose mouths got sealed by the hired shinobi.”

Ayato-san chose his words and explained. Well, in short, except for his own people and the ones who could be detained with money—they were erased. It was seriously like a historical drama, huh?

“The previous family head acquired the funds used for those purposes by unreasonably raising the price of the luxury goods like wool. The heir who succeeded the house—Taiga-dono—was aware of that and discharged the servants and the employees who remained while receiving high salary.”

“The ones who remained after the dismissal were Saya and Fubuki. However, apparently, Fubuki remained with the intention of assassinating us while we are off guards.”

Taiga-san called the two names while sighing. Saya-san truly remained by Taiga-san’s side, but as for Fubuki-san...

“And, beginning with that Fubuki-chan, the discharged employees and shinobi developed an unjustified resentment and started this time’s riot. To put it simply, this is the consequence that appeared after Touya-dono blundered.”

Leo-san heaved a sigh as if he was exasperated, as he fluttered his hands. Nah, I guess he was really exasperated. After all, he was entrusted with a duty of settling the thing that occurred since 30 years ago.

The thing that glittered on the hand that he fluttered was the crown mark. Perhaps that’s the proof that the king had entrusted him with a full authority, right? Leo-san who flaunted it plainly then looked out over Fubuki-san and each

one of the black-clothed people.

“Now then, Fubuki-chan and her friends. If you’d throw away your weapons and surrender here, I will let you receive a proper trial. However.”

At the same time as Leo-san’s words, Ayato-san and Maito-san suddenly dropped their balance. It felt like they were readying themselves so that they could move at any moment. In addition, Taiga-san and the maids also pulled one of their feet respectively as if they were pulled along by Ayato-san and Maito-san’s actions.

“If you’re resisting, I will punish you all at this place in the name of the royal family, Sumeragi. Why don’t you try and choose which one sounds better?”

His tone was as usual, but Leo-san’s voice was terribly cold and sharp.

## Chapter 83: Get Prepared, Late At Night Struggle

Fubuki-san and the others didn't response at Leo-san's declaration. In exchange, each of them held the weapon they had prepared in advance and pulled one foot just like everyone from our side.

...Is this their answer?

Leo-san seemed to have interpret it as so, and he sighed a bit. Then, he raised his cold voice.

"Seems like you wish to be punished, huh? Ayato, Maito. No need to hold back."

"Understood."

"Leave it to me."

Ayato-san and Maito-san deeply bowed their heads. And then, Maito-san respectfully held out something to Leo-san. ...E-eh? A sword, huh? It was stored in a simple scabbard and seemed to be a practical one.

Leo-san then pulled out the sword from the scabbard and glanced fleetingly at me.

"Since I think that Seiren-sama perhaps doesn't know, I'll tell you. Murder is basically a crime, but killing someone who raised a rebellion to a lord like this or a vengeance over an official matter won't count as crime. Well, it is another story if a lord is killed by some subordinates, though."

I wonder how much this person knows? For example, he even knows that I don't know the details about the law here.

Or well, with the exception of the garments or things like that, this is a world that's really similar to a historical drama. Leo-san addressed the matter of killing people like it was the commonplace.

The commonplace, huh? Even Saryuu practices swordsmanship every morning. Since he practices, it isn't weird that he'd do that for real when the actual thing is needed.

The only one who doesn't know that here is such a world is me.

"These guys don't want to be judged by the law. Lest to say that I can bring

about the so-called royal's sword judgement to them. I'll have to clean this place up."

"Leo...san..."

"Please close your eyes if you're scared. I don't have a hobby of giving trauma to a sheltered girl."

Leo-san said that apologetically while smiling. Aah, I see. Now, I could somehow really understand that he's a prince.

Since he understood well how I am not familiar with the reality of killing people, that's why he said it like that.

Then, Leo-san's eyes left me for a slight bit.

"Taiga-chan, you go and protect Seiren-chan. If it's just like this, the maids and us will be able to handle it just fine."

"H-however..."

Taiga-san stepped forward in a fluster, and then Leo-san stopped him just by his glance. The next moment, I heard a sound, "Hyun!" and there was one black-clothed person who raised their sword this way—though I hadn't noticed it—and they collapsed to the ground without any sound. Ayato-san stabbed his sword to that person's back.

One person died. But this is such kind of a world, so... Because they aimed at me and Taiga-san, Ayato-san did them.

In exchange of that person's life, the black-clothed people's movement stopped for a short while. Since they came to understand that we'd definitely strike a counterattack no matter what kind of opportunity is present.

As usual, I'm trailing away from the reality. Yup, but I guess that I have to do it this time, maybe.

"They're mainly targetting Seiren-chan and you. Seiren-chan isn't used to seeing people getting killed, right? Protect your fiancée, this is an order."

".....Yes."

After being told that with a stricter tone than earlier, Taiga-san reluctantly nodded.

Could it be that Leo-san didn't want to let me see Taiga-san killing people? Or is it that I was just overthinking it?

“Leo-san.”

“It is fiiiine-, I, Ayato, and Maito—we’re all strong. So just watch and be at ease.”

“Seiren-sama, please rest assured. We are strong, after all.”

“Saryuu too, please just stay back.”

“I-I can also fight!”

Leo-san and Ayato-san answered while smiling. Maito-san restrained Saryuu who stepped forward with a rebuking tone. Aah yup, even I can understand. Perhaps it is not a good idea to let him take out a real combat without any preparation like this.

Perhaps Maito-san knew it better than anyone else, so he rebuked Saryuu with an unusually strong tone.

“Saryuu-sama. This is a real struggle of life and death. This is neither a morning exercise nor a game. Could you understand this, please?”

“...U-Understood.”

“Instead, you shouldn’t avert your eyes. Look, and please remember the swordsmanship. It will surely be a power that you can use in a practical battle.”

“...Yes.”

In response to Maito-san’s words, Saryuu firmly nodded and took an imposing stance at that spot. That’s right, he is someone who will someday become Shiiya family’s successor, so surely he has to remember this kind of a thing. If that’s the case, then the same goes for me.

After all, I will become the bride of Taiga-san, who is the head of the Shikino family.

My legs are trembling. I think that it’s too late for me to be scared at this point. However, I have to properly watch this.

“...Taiga...san.”

“Seiren-sama?”

“I also won’t avert my eyes. Since it’s something that I have to see, then please, feel free to do it without any restrain.”

“...Yes. I will protect you.”

Taiga-san looked at me like he was surprised for a moment, but then he slowly nodded.

He went around me and turned on my back, and then he pulled out the sword

that was on his waist from its scabbard. It isn't a wooden sword that he used at the morning practice with Saryuu, but it was a tough and thick metal sword that shone brightly.

Noticing that, Leo-san tilted his head in a wonder.

"Is that fine?"

"Maybe I will still have to see it someday, after all."

"Fine. If anything happens, I'll back you up."

I wonder it is to back up? Soon after he asked, Leo-san laughed scornfully as he looked out over the black-clothed people once more. This person is not thinking of saying something like, "Thanks for not moving up until now," right?

"Look forward to it, every rebel. Let me tell you how foolish you are."

"The head of the Shikino family, Taiga. Come and go!"

At the same time as Taiga-san's name was mentioned, everyone except Saryuu and I began to move.

"Barrier, full power!!"

From Oriza-san's palm, a dazzling wall of light was powerfully spread out. Eh, it's covering Saryuu and I, huh? Certainly, if it's like this, everyone can be more focused at their battle. Perhaps.

"Aaaaaaaaah!"

Then, from that side, Alica-san and Minoa-san jumped out at the same time. Minoa-san clenched her fists, while Alica-san took out a long pole from who-knows-where... Not that, it seems to be a spear that has been prepared in advance.

"Ha!!"

Minoa-san slipped in front of the black-clothed person who dodged and passed under the spear that Alica-san waved. After the fist hit the opponent's waist that caused them to be blown off with one blow, the spear returned with one rotation and its pointed end pierced the opponent's abdomen. Then, another black-clothed person jumped in as they targeted Alica-san whose movement stopped for a moment after the spear pierced her opponent. However, before the knife that they raised overhead could touch her, another



small-sized knife pierced their body.

“Now, let me return the favor first.”

As Leo-san cracked the joke, his slender sword spun around and sliced another black-clothed person. This scene looked like a shooting session of a historical drama. With a smooth movement, I can't really comprehend whether it's still the reality or not. But since I can see blood scattering about, at the very least, this doesn't feel like a drama.

“Kanna.”

“Yess!!”

Tokino-san nimbly pushed out the long pole—that I don't know just where she got it from—many times over. Along with the noise it made, each stab properly stuck the black-clothed person's leg or abdomen, or other area. Here I thought that the black-clothed people moved quite fast, but it seemed that Tokino-san's pole movement was ahead of their movements.

Kanna-san whose name was called by Tokino-san then agilely jumped underneath the black-clothed person whose movement was stopped by the pole and circled her arms on their neck. Then, she wrung it sideways. As Kanna-san let go of the black-clothed person, they collapsed just like that, and probably...

Maki-san ran and targeted the throat of the black-clothed person from beneath, as if she was scooping with the katana that she held in the opposite direction with both of her hands. Whoa, I saw how it directly went through them.

“Seiren-sama.”

“I-I'm fine.”

That was the best answer I could say in response to Taiga-san who was guarding my back.

This world isn't the world where I grew up until I turned 18.

It is a world where kings and feudal lords exist, where swords and magic are practiced. As expected, there doesn't seem to exist something like monsters, but this is such kind of a world.

Even I had my life being aimed at and targeted. Everyone only fought back.

Even after this, it will always remain a world where I can't say that such things won't happen.

That's why...

"If you're not used to it, then it's better for you not to watch it."

The moment Maito-san's sword stabbed into one of the black-clothed people, I was suddenly blindfolded by a slightly rough hand. The voice that I heard just now was Saya-san's voice. Behind that, I also heard a voice like, "Gugeeh!", but I wonder who was it?

"B-but..."

"Please close your eyelids. For you to be dragged into this kind of a place, it's all due to us servants' failure. Originally, Seiren-sama wasn't supposed to witness such bloody scene at all."

As Saya-san continued to cover my eyes, she also took someone's hand. The hand that was linked together to mine, perhaps it was Saryuu's hand.

"Saryuu-sama. I'll be relying on you for that (reassuring Seiren by holding her hand)."

"Yes, I understand. I'm also relying on you, Saya."

Saryuu probably nodded, and then he grasped my hand tightly.

That's how I was only able to hear the sounds after this.

Sounds of fierce footsteps and the sound of metals clashing. Someone's rough breathing, and the moment their breathing stopped.

The sound of meat being stabbed, and the dull sound of the edge of a sword or knife.

Soundless shriek full of death agony.

"Fubuki."

I opened my eyes when Taiga-san called her name.

The scent of blood was hanging in the surrounding's air, and here and there, there were black-clothed people scattered about. If this were to happen in a broad daylight, I might be able to see the scene more clearly, for example their dying faces or the flowing blood, but since it's night time right now, I can't really see everything clearly. After all, it's not like the surroundings could be illuminated brightly just like in the broad daylight with only the help of the light

that I assumed to be produced by a magical torch.

Amidst everything, the only remaining black-clothed person was facing Taiga-san. Obviously, it was Fubuki-san. The maids and Leo-san and the others have already stored their weapons back, and everyone is standing in such a way that they're encircling the two of them.

"You don't have any intention of surrendering, do you?"

"Absolutely not. For the sake of the previous family head—for the sake of Touya-sama, I'm going to have Taiga-sama come to your end here."

"Then, I also won't pull back my sword. You'd better be prepared."

"Here I go!"

As if signaling something, Fubuki-san kicked the ground. She put the knife that she grasped with an underhand grip in front of her chest as she went to thrust it into Taiga-san's bust.

Against that Fubuki-san, Taiga-san had already been waiting with his sword half-raised in the air. Then, he dodged the approaching Fubuki-san just by sliding sideways for a slight degree as he caught the knife with the base of the sword that he raised overhead.

Soon after I heard a hard sound unpleasant to the ears, I heard the sound of meat being sliced following.

"...Oof!"

As she vomited blood, Fubuki-san slowly collapsed. Taiga-san's sword which caught the knife was pushed forward just like that as it cut off Fubuki-san's nape of the neck.

## Chapter 84: Heartily, Early Dawn Conversation

For a moment, there was a complete silence. The wind also didn't blow, and it was really quiet.

I stared without moving at Fubuki-san who collapsed. This person who was still moving until just a moment ago—now, she isn't moving at all.

Perhaps because I was raised at the institution, I wasn't too involved in the so-called funerals. Since I had no relatives, I almost practically never went to the hospital to visit on someone who was ill, much less to be present at someone's moment of death.

In front of me, around 10 or more lives disappeared in just the span of a few minutes. It was because this is such a world and that such a situation happened, but still.

"Seiren-sama."

Taiga-san's voice as he called me was slightly stiff. He lightly shook his sword in order to make the blood drop before storing it in its scabbard. Then, he slipped next to me.

I tried to hold on and raised my face to let Taiga-san see it. I wonder if I'm smiling properly? I wonder if my face clearly conveys that I'm all right?

...I'm fine. It's something that ought to be done, right?"

"...Yes."

I'm not sure how it goes, but at least, Taiga-san nodded at my words. And since I noticed that the hand that wanted to touch me trembled and drifted away from me, I grabbed that hand and brought it closer to me.

"It's fine. I'm all right."

Because in order that I can stand next to this person, I have to be fine when facing this kind of a thing.

"Ayato, Maito."

Leo-san's voice resounded in the night sky. With that, our consciousness also returned to the reality. Ah, but I won't let go of Taiga-san's hand. I don't know

what else to say, though, damn it.

“Let’s hurry and clean up. Dear maids, I’ll be relying on you to take care of the two Shiiya siblings. I will properly handle the rest.”

“Understood. Maito?”

“I understand.”

“As the Shikino family’s servant, I’ll help you out.”

After they looked at each other and nodded, they started to carry the collapsed black-clothed people. Is this what they mean by cleaning up? Saya-san also lifted one person on her shoulder as if it was natural.

...Right? This is the reality, not a drama, so there’s no way they’d just disappear while collapsing on the ground like that. We have to properly clean everything up, right?

“Seiren-sama.”

“Are you all right?”

“Seiren-sama, Taiga-sama.”

“Never mind me. Please look after Seiren-sama. As expected, it seems like it was quite intense for her.”

Beginning with Alica-san, Oriza-san and Minoa-san also rushed over here. Taiga-san said that while pushing my back, but I don’t really want to be away from Taiga-san.

...Ah-, is this a woman’s feeling? To be honest, I don’t really know how much of [Shikino Seiren] still remains inside of me.

Meanwhile, there were Maki-san and Kanna-san, followed by Tokino-san rushing over to Saryuu’s side. Saryuu’s knees were trembling, but he acted brave when he saw his maids. Males must be strong, right?

“Saryuu-sama, are you all right?”

“I-I’m fine. Just this much is fine.”

“Yes yes, you endured well-. Tokino, let’s escort him back to the room.”

“That’s right. First, calm down, and then please take a rest.”

“Eh, ah, ...yes.”

...Strong, is it? He’s going to return to the mansion while being surrounded by his maids readily, huh? Well, it’s not like they’d be able to do something useful

by absent-mindedly standing over here. I'm also included, though.  
Leo-san glanced at me and also Taiga-san who was with me, and then he narrowed his eyes.

"Taiga-chan, go and stay by Seiren-chan's side. As for the disposal or anything like that, these kinds of things can be done with just us and Saya-chan."

"Eh? But..."

"Even you could understand with just looking at Seiren-chan, right? She wishes to stay by your side."

He said that to Taiga-san with a slightly angry tone. Yup, he managed to grasp the meaning behind my firmly grasping Taiga-san's hand. The maids are reliable, too, though.

After smiling with his mouth alone, Leo-san looked at me with his usual facial expression. Ah, but his eyes aren't smiling.

"Seiren-chan, it's fine even if you don't get used to such fighting scene, okay? Since if you get used to it, you'd want to deny your power (authority)."

"...Yes."

"Well, if you happen to see it, then go and see it. At least you have to fully understand that such things exist though you're not used to it."

I wonder if it's fine even if I'm not used to it? However, since Leo-san said so, I guess that's fine.

At least, I was told that it was fine even if I see it. After all, I also have to see the dark parts of the world that I'm going to live in from now on.

Ayato-san and Minoa-san quickly tidied up the black-clothed people together. It really seemed like they're used to it already, and I think that there was not much emotion in their faces. ...Scary.

Then, the last one remaining was the collapsed Fubuki-san who lied on her face. Maito-san turned her up. At that time, I could see that there was something red brimming over her chest.

"...Ah."

I opened my eyes in surprise.

The red thing spilled from the collapsed Fubuki-san. When I thought that it was blood, it seemed that there was something else.

There was the scarf that I gave her as a souvenir. She kept it with her. When I gave it to her, Fubuki-san smiled awkwardly, and yet... It finally became my first and last souvenir for her.

“...”

Aah, this is bad, My tears won't stop. Along with my tears, for some reason, my consciousness was also washed away.

“...Eh?”

When I recovered my consciousness, I was in the bed. Eh, was it... only a dream? Perhaps not.

“Seiren-sama, have you woken up?”

“Taiga-san?”

“Yes.”

After all, if it was only a dream, this person wouldn't be here right now. He'd be riding Genjirou outside the window, and Minoa-san would want to throw a basket on him.

...Eh, Minoa-san and the other maids aren't here? Could they be sleeping?

“Uhm, what about my maids...?”

“They're cleaning up while alternatively taking break.”

I guess so. The maids are also humans, so if they don't rest, their bodies won't hold on.

Then, there's another question. It's about this person who's right in front of my eyes.

“Is that so... Then, uhm, why is Taiga-san...?”

“Everyone told me to accompany you. Saya even scolded me.”

“Even Saya?”

“Yeah.”

...After an objective consideration, is it something like, ‘Your fiancée collapsed, so you—the head of the family, go and take care of her!’ Also, leaving only the two of us alone... No, is there even someone who'd think that far? Did I just think too much?

Inside the room where only Taiga-san and I are in, the light wasn't lit. However,

I could see Taiga-san's face because the thing that resembled a small lamp at the bedside was lit. Ah-, is this a portable magical light? It feels like a flashlight. Now then, I wonder how long has it been since I collapsed?

"What time is it now? Is it morning already?"

"No, the sun hasn't risen yet."

"I see..."

Then, time hasn't passed that much, I guess. Today, after eating a breakfast, I'd have to ride the carriage and return to the Shiiya mansion. Since today is the last day of the harvest festival, there will be a lot of people and that'd be difficult, right?

...Hmm? No, no, wait a minute.

"..Ah, I wonder if I'll be able to go home?"

"Why is that?"

"Eh, I mean... wouldn't there be an investigation and questioning of this matter?"

"You'd still be able to do that even if you return to the mansion, right? In the first place, Leo-sama is staying there, too."

Ah, that's right. Leo-san came to freeload at our place as a distant relative's eldest son, was it?

Which means, Leo-sama would also return to the Shiiya mansion, and then he'd be able to conduct the questioning of the situation from there... I guess? Nah well, I'll only have to narrate on everything that I have seen.

Everything that I have seen, huh?

Just the day before, the situation was completely different.

What I recalled was the deep crimson scarf and the person who received it with an embarrassed grin.

"...You see, about Fubuki-san..."

"Yes?"

"When I gave her a present, she smiled awkwardly. And she also thanked me."

"...Yes."

"...Despite it, I wonder if that kind of a thing was still bound to happen?"

I know. No matter what I said, perhaps, she'd only feel indifferent and



thought, “Aah.”

For what she believed in, even if I hadn’t spoken anything suspicious, surely she’d still strive for that belief.

“Fubuki... couldn’t be stopped.”

Those words were mixed with a sigh—and despite it was said with a very small voice, it properly reached my ears.

I know. After all, I was also present at that place.

“...I’m sorry. Although Taiga-san had it the hardest...”

“Thank you for your concern.”

My words aren’t empty words. Fubuki-san has always been working hard as Taiga-san’s—no—Shikino household’s maid. Then, Taiga-san also had faith in her and entrusted me to her.

With how things were, surely it’d be very hard on him, right?

However, towards me who was thinking of such thing—Taiga-san replied with a smile.

“I’m all right. If I were to say that this is too hard, then Uncle would surely scold me. He’d say that he won’t hand Seiren over to me that way, so...”

“Ah-, if it’s the orphanage director, it seems like he’d say that.”

Nah, when you said that as a joke... Truthfully, the orphanage director paid a great attention to me. It might be because he understands me to a certain extent.

...Speaking of which, Taiga-san... did he realize that he just addressed me without any honorific just before? Or did he deliberately do that?

Hehe. Despite the circumstances being like this, I feel a little bit happy, maybe... just what am I thinking? I got so embarrassed that I covered my head inside the bed. Eeii, really, not being able to be aware of the surroundings is really troublesome. Good grief.

Then, I felt the sensation of Taiga-san’s hand lightly tapping on the bed. Ah-, this feels like a parent putting a child on the bed?

“Then, please take a good rest until the morning. I will be right here.”

“Ah-, yup, thanks.”

Taiga-san seemed to have misunderstood my gesture of covering myself deep

inside the bed and thought that I was sleepy. No, well, I also thought that sleeping might be good for a change of pace. There's still time before morning, so let's try to sleep a bit.

...As expected, I couldn't really put it into words. Taiga-san's face as he looked at me like this, it was really similar to the orphanage director's.

Nah, I wonder if it looks more like the face of a parent raising their child?

## Chapter 85: Afterward, Returning Home

The next day, Saryuu and I returned to the Shiiya mansion without any particular incident happening. My parents and the servants already know of the circumstances, so when my mother saw my face, she immediately hugged me tightly. Well, obviously she'd be very worried.

"Ooh, I'm so glad... Really glad..."

"...I'm sorry."

I could only mutter that word. I mean, what else can I say. Well? Then, Leo-san and the others who returned home together with us took over the situation. Frankly speaking, I'm very ignorant of the detailed circumstances, so it'd be faster for the people who came here to conduct the investigation in the first place to be the ones to explain things, right?

Due to that, everyone could only calm down when it was time for dinner. No, really, they're being overly doting parents again at this point of time. So, before and after dinner time, Leo-san questioned me about the matter. The faster it gets talked about, the faster it'll be done, so it's fine.

"Yes, thank you. Thanks for your hard work, Seiren-chan."

After dinner, I also answered various questions, and Maito-san wrote down everything. When Leo-san announced that the questioning ended, it was already around one hour after dinner ended.

"Don't mention it. ...Is it enough?"

"Yup. After all, Seiren-chan, you don't really know the detailed matter, right?"

Leo-san who said it without any hesitation was totally like the usual Leo-san. Though he might be smiling, ever since he returned to the Shiiya mansion by riding Hanako from the Shikino mansion, he has explained many things to my parents, and then did a questioning to me. Leo-san has it hard, right?

"Well, that's right..."

"That's why it's fine. I have asked for the detailed information from the surviving criminals."

"There are survivors?"

“They’re strangely durable, but sometimes that’s good. Also, the group who attacked Seiren-chan at the carriage were lively.”

Ah, I’ve completely forgotten that there were a group of assailants who were led by that security officer. However, I feel like we won’t hear any crucial information from them for some reason.

Then, Leo-san glanced at the door. Ayato-san was there and bowed his head while saying, “We’re also finished.” He did the questioning of my maids as he stood at the opposite side of the partitioning screen in the same room.

“The maids’ questioning seemed to be finished as well. Please drink some tea and take a rest, okay?”

“I will do so. What about Leo-san?”

It was also difficult on Leo-san, so it’d be great if we could at least drink some tea together. I thought so and invited him, but Leo-san smiled amusingly and answered.

“Oh my, is that fine? Taiga-chan might misunderstand.”

“Taiga-san isn’t that kind of a person.”

“Oh dear?”

Eh, why did you fall prostrated on the table, Leo-san? Did I just say something weird?

“When you spoke fondly of him like that, I don’t feel like meddling at all between the two of you.”

“Eh? But I’m not speaking fondly of him, you know?”

“You not having any self-awareness is such an atrocious thing-...”

...I-is that so? I don’t quite understand it, but did people think of it as speaking fondly of someone when they heard me say that? Whoa, for some reason, my face feels hot, let’s be more careful.

Still with my hot face, I had Alica-san make some tea. Beyond the partitioning screen, Ayato-san and the others along with our maids were drinking some tea, and it seemed to be a way for them to take a rest.

Well, with the events happening yesterday and today, obviously they’d be tired. But, aside from me, Leo-san who was drinking the tea while checking the documents in front of me could possibly have always been investigating various

things even before he came to this mansion.

“...Leo-san, isn't conducting a secret investigation difficult?”

“Well, yes. However, I've become perfectly used to do this kind of a job.”

“Is this your current job?”

“Yup.”

When I think about it, that seems to be the case. As expected, there's no way one could have a hobby of investigating things like this, even if he was the prince. In the first place, since this kind of an investigation is a job, he'd make a proper document like this.

“Since I am a prince, if I go around idly, my surroundings will get noisy. Since I am originally like this, there are lots of dignitaries who'd think that I'm not worthy to become the heir to the throne.”

Then Leo-san voiced something that could be said as a reason to why he handled this kind of a job.

Ah-, even the heir of a feudal lord like the orphanage director or Touka-san also had to deal with lots of complaints, much less the next king. Since he's an important person who will govern the country, the surroundings get worried over petty things excessively for sure, right?

“And because of that, I'm investigating things such as the tax yields of the feudal lords here and there, and things like fraud and suspicions. To put it easily, it's because they're directly related to our (country's) income.”

“Ah-.”

That's why Leo-san showed that he could do his own job properly, and then showed that he could perform splendidly as the next heir to the throne, huh? So that nobody could make a complaint for when he becomes the king in the future.

It will bring only hardships if he's viewed as a coquettish effeminate man from the others' point of views.

“However, it's also my real intention when I told you that I came here to see Seiren-chan. If you hear that there's a sheltered girl who finally returns to her family's mansion, wouldn't you become curious of her?”

“I have done a debut party at my mansion, and the feudal lords from here and

there really came to see me. They were certainly curious about me, weren't they?"

"That is of course. In any case, the tasks pressed to the feudal lords are quite tedious, so obviously the debut party of a sheltered girl would seem interesting, wouldn't it?"

Ah-, as expected, I was treated as some kind of a rare animal in the zoo, huh? Damn it. Or rather, Leo-san, did you come here to see me or to conduct an investigation of the Shikino? Which one is it?

"Anyway, Seiren-chan..."

Suddenly, Leo-san narrowed his eyes. Ah-, his gaze feels like he's scheming for something or the likes of it. Since I understand that, I slightly pulled my upper body behind.

"You grew up as a boy, right? Since you're more female-like than me, I didn't even notice it."

"Wha-"

"Taiga-chan seemed to try hard to come up with an explanation, so I forcibly got the information out of him. That's why, I properly understand about the previous head of the Shikino family."

Eh?

Whoa, so he knew about me?

Which means, he also knows everything about how the previous head wasn't Touya-san, but he was actually Touka-san?

But could it be that since he knew everything about it, he understood the inside thing happening in the Shikino family, and so he could properly conduct his investigation?

"It's fine. Ayato, Maito, and I won't talk about it. It's a secret to the other people, right?"

"Eh, ah, yes."

Whoa, I inadvertently nodded. Aaah, was I found out?

Oh well, as I was greatly perplexed, Leo-san tapped the table using his fingertips. In front of me who raised my face in a fluster, his gaze became serious. Whoa, if he is normally like this, he'd be cool, though. Still, he comes in

the second place after Taiga-san.

“I vow in my name and the royal family Sumeragi, and also to the God of Sun that I won’t let out your secret to the others. Will you believe me?”

His own name, his family name, and then the God of Sun who made the world. Vowing in these three’s names means that it’s a promise that he’d definitely can’t break.

It’s not like it will be counted as a crime if it ever gets breached, but in this world, such a thing is an obvious common sense.

If the vow gets breached, for example, Leo-san won’t become the king, or even his position as the prince would be lost. It’s that kind of an important promise. And Leo-san used such a method in order to protect my secret. If it’s like that, then...

“If you declared it like that, there’s no way I won’t believe it, right? Besides, Leo-san doesn’t seem like you’d make such a lie.”

“Oh my, thank you. I’m so happy that you believe me.”

After hearing my answer, Leo-san smiled—and as expected, he was the usual Leo-san.

Then, the next day.

In front of the mansion’s entrance, a heavily-decoated carriage arrived to pick someone up. Whoa, the royal crown is magnificently attached. The royal family is amazing.

It seems that Ayato-san would ride on Hanako that Leo-san rode on when he came here. She seemed to be quite boisterous, so it seems like she isn’t suited to pull the carriage calmly.

Then, Leo-san who came out of the guest room was totally [a prince].

He hardly has any make up on, and his red hair is simply tied together. Under his deep crimson mantle, he wears a white and black outfit, and when you look at him like this, one could tell with a glance that he’s the heir of the royal family.

“It was only for a short time, but I had fun.”

Even so, since his tone was as usual, I once again felt clearly that as expected, Leo-san was indeed Leo-san.

He turned towards me and winked. This too, is typical of Leo-san, so I feel slightly relieved.

“Get along well with Taiga-chan, okay? If something happens, I will definitely rush off there, so don’t hesitate to tell me.”

“But you should prioritize your job more, all right?”

“I understand that, you see-? Saryuu-chan, protect your adorable big sister, okay?”

“Of course. After all, I have decided that I would protect Nee-sama until she gets married to Nii-sama.”

“What a brave kid, please do your best. However, overdoing it is a taboo, okay?”

The words that he uttered to me and Saryuu—I don’t really understand it, but it feels like it’s heavily packed up with emotion. Leo-san seems to have experienced lots of things since he was born as the prince, huh?

“Mondo-ojisama, Maya-obasama, I’m much obliged to you.”

“No need to mention it. We also apologize that we can’t provide you much hospitality, Your Highness.”

“With the circumstances be as it may, please pardon our various impoliteness.”

“No, it was really fun. Thank you very much, really.”

Tou-san and Kaa-san were being apologetic like that, but wasn’t it Leo-san who told them to treat him in such a way like that from the start? So that his identity won’t be exposed to me and Saryuu. That’s why, it was inevitable. After smiling gently at both of my parents, Leo-san quickly stood up. He walked several steps towards the carriage while being accompanied with Ayato-san and Maito-san, then he suddenly turned around. His red hair and mantle wavered together, and it looked beautiful.

“Mission accomplished, I’m returning to the royal capital after this. Take care, everyone of the Shiiya family.”

With his usual voice, he bid a farewell to us.